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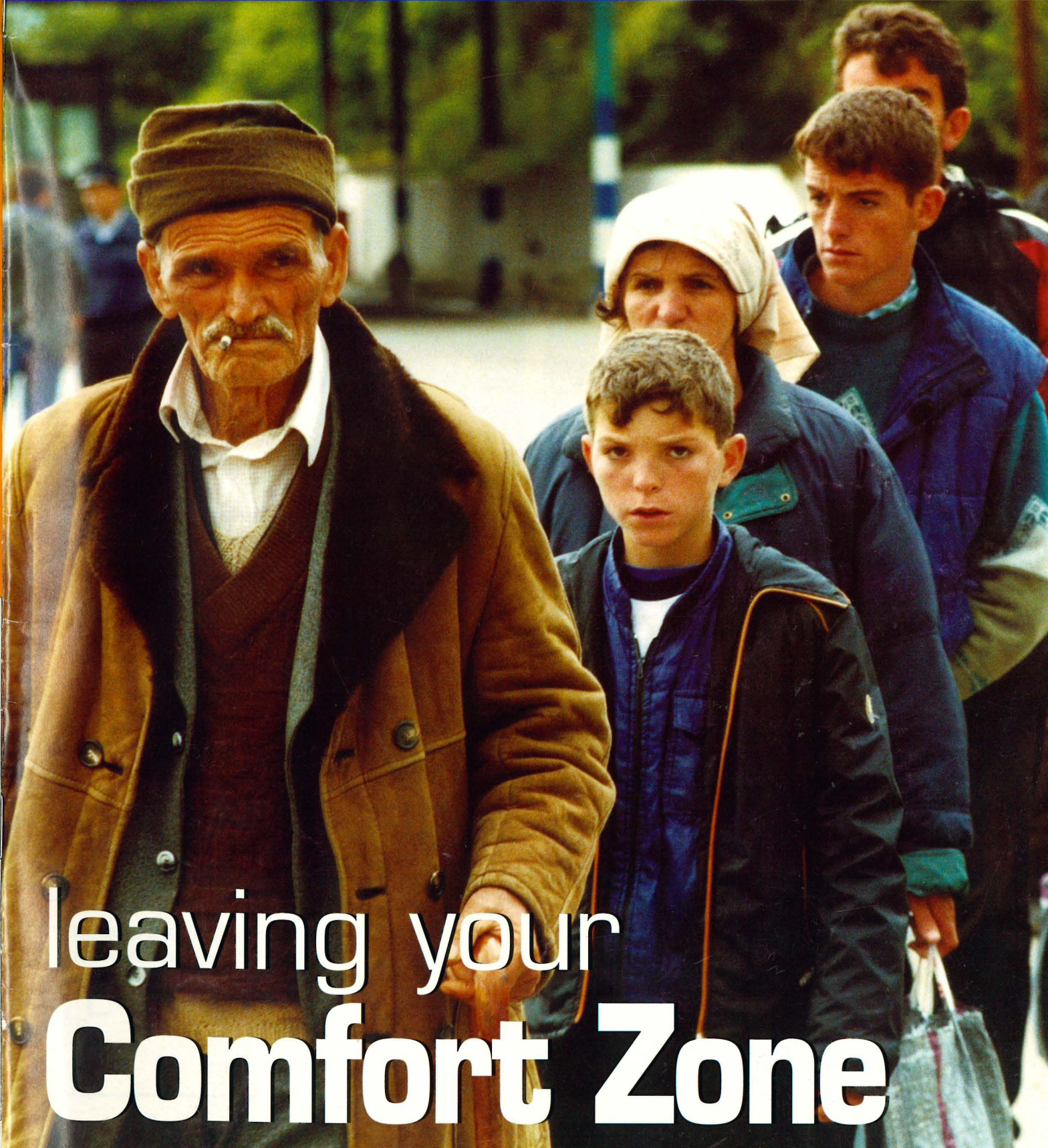
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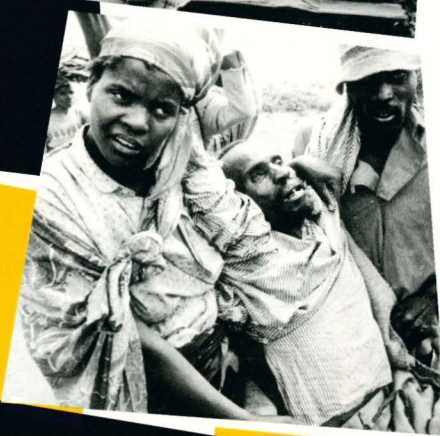
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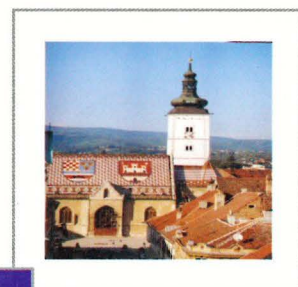
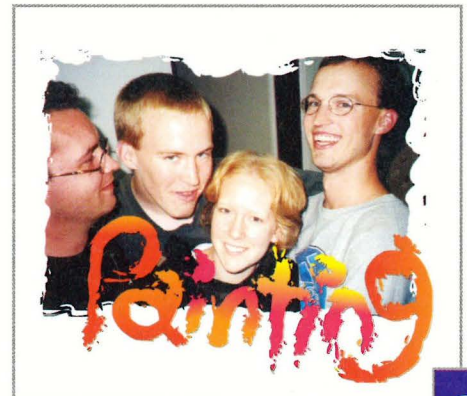
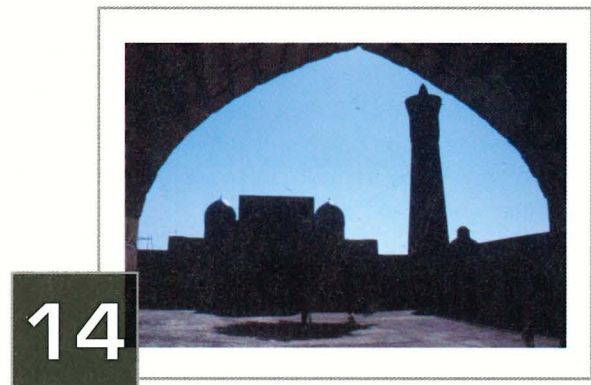
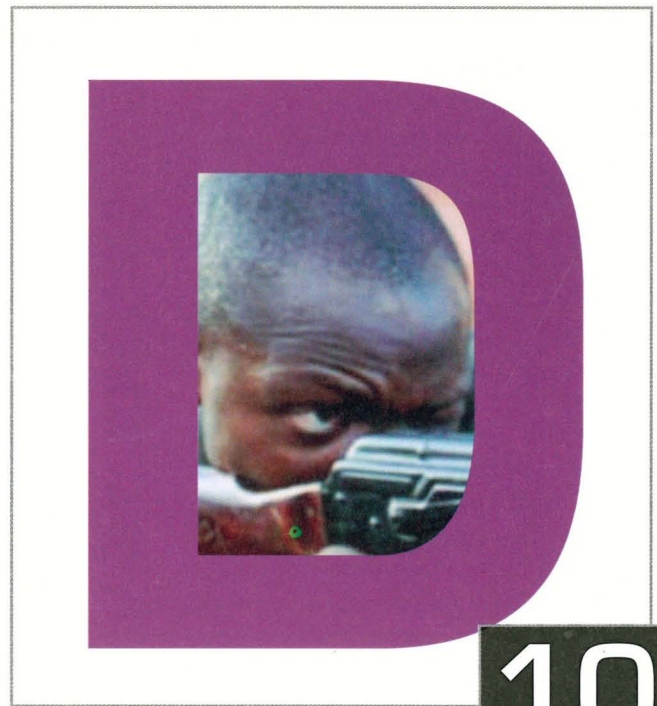
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COVER PICTURE KOSOVAR REFUGEES, ALEX SMITH

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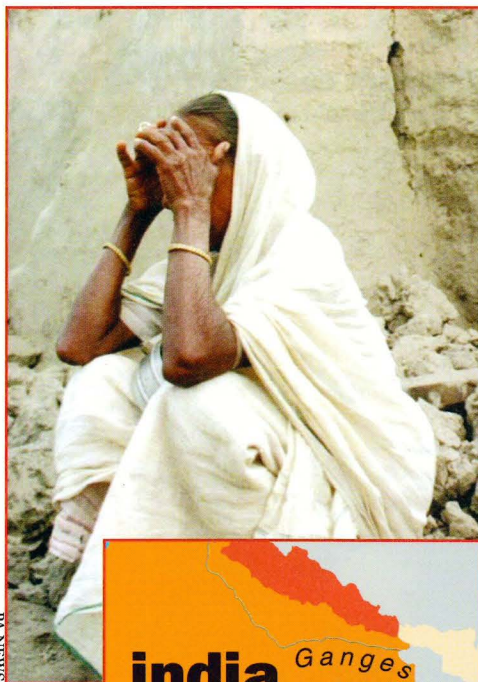


With best wishes,

Jan



[editorial](#)



India BMS helps cyclone victims

BMS has given £25,000 from its Relief Fund to help in the aftermath of the cyclones that ripped through the eastern Indian state of Orissa, leaving as many as 5,000 people dead and more than 1.5 million homeless.

Five thousand pounds will be used towards the costs for re-roofing the nurses quarters at the Christian Hospital for Women and Children at Berhampur. Many roofs

The nature of the disaster hampered relief workers reaching the area, and made it impossible for an immediate assessment of the damage. Helicopters were used to drop food packets to remote areas. The Prime Minister Vajpayee declared it a 'national calamity'.

(Christian Daily News)

mh january : february 2000 **5**

Chechnya Christians flee terrors

Two elderly women
members of Grozny Baptist



Church, Chechnya, have reportedly been brutally murdered. An 82 year-old widow was allegedly tortured, raped and strangled; another woman in her 70s was beaten to death. Another woman member was kidnapped and her abductors are demanding US \$4,000 for her release. Earlier in 1999 the



church's pastor Alexander Kulakov, was kidnapped and murdered. His severed head was put on public display in Grozny. The man who took over as pastor, Vitaly Korotun, a 23 year-old deacon, was abducted in August 1999.

Because of the threats and violence, 23 of the church's members have fled the area, and are now living in a safe house in southern Russia. Those who are left are having to cope with

situations of increasing lawlessness and instability.

It is believed that around 40 Christians remain in this breakaway, predominantly Muslim, republic of Chechnya. (EBPS, Open Doors)

Nepal Christian workers expelled

In a wave of persecution against Christians, ten Protestant churches have been burned by fanatical Hindu groups. The Nepal Baptist Church Council has joined with other Christians in speaking to the government about the protection of human rights.

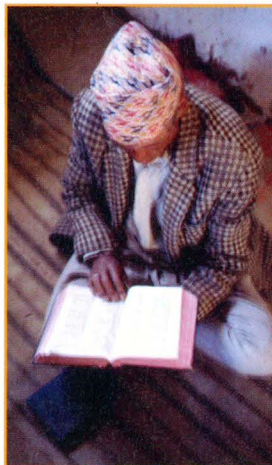
Elsewhere in Nepal, ten International Nepal Fellowship (INF) workers and their families were issued with exit visas, and given 14 days to leave the country. Some of those named were already out of the country on leave or home assignment. INF state that the expulsions have nothing to do with the individual's conduct, but relate to their 'extra' or 'out of work' activities, that is, religious or Christian activities.

For a long while INF personnel had experienced delays in obtaining residence and exit visas. BMS workers Colin and Denise Clark told BMS General Committee in October how they had only had valid visas for five out of 22 months, and then had difficulty obtaining their exit visas to come back to the UK. The delay in granting these visas is believed to

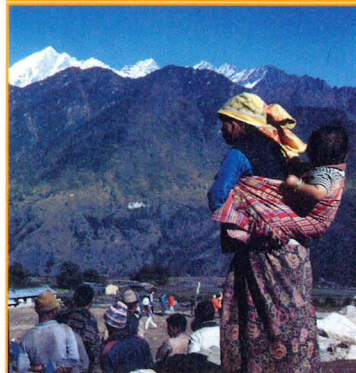
have been a way of obtaining the expulsions of the ten INF workers.

The situation has been brought to the attention of British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Robin Cook, who has intervened, raising the issue with his Nepali counterpart.

INF have declared that if the situation regarding long outstanding visas was not



resolved by mid November, then INF would ask those personnel involved to leave Nepal within three months. Such a decision will present



practical difficulties for the individuals and projects, some of which will have to be cancelled.

It seems that only those who have been in Nepal with INF for a long period of time are affected by this situation. (BWA/INF)

French Baptists pray and fast

The Federation of Baptist Churches in France (FEEBF) encouraged its 111 member churches to rise to the challenge of sharing the gospel and to join in three days of prayer and fasting. The FEEBF General Secretary Etienne Lhermenault and Director of Evangelism Bernard Delépine said "We invite you to join us in prayer". On Day One "we want to repent of our lack of zeal in witnessing; the lack of unity that keeps churches and denominations from working together; the wrong motives that stain our evangelistic efforts." On Day Two "please pray with us for renewed compassion, for the planting of new churches, for increased creativity and boldness in our proclamation of the good news." And on Day Three "An invitation will be given in worship services for congregations to discern who among them God is calling to serve as evangelists, pastors or church planters, for church members to move out for the gospel through personal witnessing, practical service, and support of those involved in such



ministries."

The leaders added, "French men and women often have a

rationalistic mind set that is a barrier to faith in Jesus." The French Baptists have invited other denominations in France to join them in Spring 2000 in another time of prayer and fasting. "Together, let us lift up our voice and ask the Lord to have mercy on this country" say Lhermenault and Delépine. The FEEBF has 111 churches with 6,224 members. (EBPS)

Ukraine/USA Sister churches evangelise former Soviet Union

additional regular attendees.

For two years the group from Minnesota has travelled to the Ukraine to run a children's camp. The church helped out by sending supplies, leading the crafts programme and arranging sports activities, while the church from Uman provided the camp leadership, teachers and helpers.

One of the Uman leaders, a man called Vladimir, told the Minnesota group to expect about 20 to 25 children for the camp, but in the event 39 turned up and 25 of them expressed an interest in going to a weekly Sunday school class led by another Uman church member called Nina.



One of the visitors from Minnesota, Betty Foulkes, commented that "the children were amazed at the fact they had a choice of materials. Normally they might only have one coloured pencil or crayon, and they would have to share that with others," she said. (Assist)

Kosovo BMS helps Kosovans get ready for winter

Winter comes suddenly in the Balkans. From the end of October the days of warmth and sunshine

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

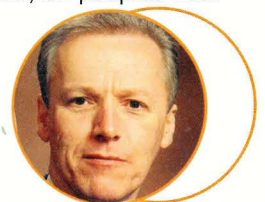
People in this country nod, smile, say 'Hmm..., interesting' but I don't think they believe me. I tell them the world is exploding technologically, and that in the most remote of places satellite dishes are springing up. People who used to have little awareness outside their own region are now world conscious and media bombarded as never before. But that's hard for us to grasp. We're slow to subscribe to satellite TV or the Internet so how can poorer nations be ahead?

But many are. The photo here is from Thailand. The location is a remote village; the house is a traditional self-build wooden construction on stilts. The family are not especially poor, but neither are they well-off. And out the back, among the shrubs, there's an enormous satellite dish. Often they're watching the programmes we watch. They're being asked to buy the same international brand names as us. Other cultures are impacting them like never before in history.

Is that bad? It can be. But minds open to new ideas are also open as never before to the gospel. I don't champion pumping people with culturally insensitive Christian messages, but wise programming can be a powerful tool for God's work.

So here we are in 2000. BMS has new enthusiasm for mission. We'll be doing face to face mission work, but we'll also be using other ways of passing on the good news: satellite TV, the Internet and whatever else is available. We mean to go through every open door God puts before us. May this be the century when, for the first time, all peoples hear the good news. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



change, and for four months the temperature does not rise above freezing; often it is minus 20° in the daytime. Families and family groups are preparing for winter. Eight villages to the north and west of Prishtina have been identified by BMS personnel to be in special

need and they are all receiving regular supplies of food. Families have been encouraged to identify a room in their damaged home to seal off, and use for all activities. BMS has given a grant of 100,000 DM (that is £32,600) to buy 200 wood



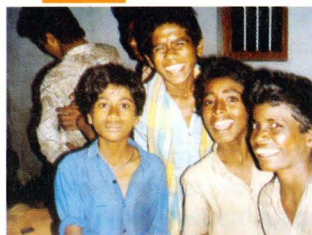
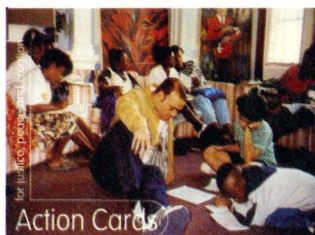
stoves and four cubic metres of wood per family to provide warmth and cooking facilities in two or three of these villages.



The wood should last throughout the winter. It is having to be bought from a safe area and transported to the region, because many people have been killed or injured trying to collect firewood because of mines.

In another initiative different families in Kosovo are being encouraged to live under the same roof together for the winter. BMS has provided a grant of 20,000 DM (£6,550) to provide concrete blocks which will act as screen walls to give each family a degree of privacy.

action card



ACTION CARDS

Action Cards for 2000 can be ordered from Christians Aware, 2 Saxby Street, Leicester, LE2 0ND (Tel/Fax 0116 254 0770). Themes for the year include issues of fair trade, poverty, the environment, refugees, child labour, debt and development. Use the Action Cards to send a message of support, protest, congratulations or challenge.

They cost £2.50 per pack. Cheques or postal orders to be made payable to Christians Aware. ●

Vinoth Ramachandra

Choice and Character

"Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered... So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out towards the east." (Gen 12:10 -11)

"Moses chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin... He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt." (Heb 11:25 - 6)

We face choices all the time. These range from the trivial ("What shall I make for dinner?") to the life-changing ("Should I change my job?"). Choices we make reflect both our character and our basic framework of thinking, what is sometimes called our "world-view". But the reverse also holds: we make choices, but our choices also make us. It is the choices we make that determine what kind of people we turn out to be.

For instance, Lot's choice reflected the popular worldview. Prosperity is more important than godliness. He ended up a weak, ineffectual man humiliated by his own children. In contrast, Moses' decision sprang from a different vision. It led to loneliness, rejection and apparent forsakenness by God himself. But he ended up a humble, broken and powerful leader of God's people, one with whom God talked as a friend.

Moreover, every major decision involves risk and a measure of uncertainty. This is how God has arranged things in his world, so that we trust in him and not in our decision, that we love him and not his gifts. So when we demand of God that he gives us "assurance" before we do something that we know (from all other factors) to be the most God-honouring thing to do, might we be guilty of unbelief? ●

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES.





lee bray's diary

LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Here are some extracts from his diary.

Sunday 24

Departing was hard - it would be so easy to stay! At the morning service in Upton Vale Andrew and I are much prayed for ☐☐ - in the pulpit, in the pew, in the aisle - there is a great sense of God's presence with us. We fly from Heathrow - flight time 7 hours 45 minutes.

Monday 25

We land at Dhaka airport at 16.10 (six hours time difference). Dhaka airport is very basic but seems well enough organised, and John Passmore, the 'area rep' for BMS, is there on the other side of the barrier to meet us.



Nothing, I think, could have prepared me for what follows. The airport gates are thronged with people, clamouring to get in or out - it's hard to tell which. Andrew seems to know where he is going and plunges into the crowd so I follow him. Beggars press around us, many are small children. One young girl carries a baby (her own?); she utters some English - "No father, no father" - repeated over and over. I have no idea how to respond, and can only trail Andrew to where John is waiting to stow our luggage into the van - and us with it! Outside the streets are just the same! What had I expected? I had simply been too busy to anticipate anything, and maybe that was just as well. The streets are awash with traffic - people, bicycle rickshaws, three-wheeled 'baby-taxis', trucks, cars, buses all laden to the brim. Horns blare constantly, but nobody - vehicles or pedestrians - seems to take the least bit of notice. Traffic weaves, cuts corners, and keeps left some of the time. Vehicles are battered and scraped. Damage is painted over (or not). At every junction, wherever traffic stops, beggars and street vendors - mostly children - crowd the road. Pandemonium, noise, colours, faces, activity is everywhere - Bangladesh sucks me in! We are to stay at the BMS flat in Jahanara Gardens Green Road - sounds nice! We turn into a street that seems impassable, and drive down it at a great rate, horn blaring. Suddenly a sharp left into a narrow alley, another blast on the horn, a solid metal gate is slid open and we drive into a concrete yard. We have arrived! No gardens and no green anywhere in evidence! Secure (?) behind this metal gate is a small set of flats, one of which belongs to BMS. We are welcomed by Sue Headlam, local missionary, who makes us a cup of tea and gives us a 'replica' digestive biscuit! We have some things for her - best of all - a copy of The Sunday Times.

Tuesday 26

2am. I'm lying awake listening to the sounds of Dhaka by night - a man sings, a dog barks, a whistle is blown, each of these regularly, and every hour, on the hour, a clock plays a tune, a different tune for each hour - Dhaka doesn't sleep it seems. Nor do I, or at least, not much. Feels utterly strange and lonely too - I miss Dot and the children and find myself working out time differentials and counting days, and we're only a day into a relatively short trip.



To be continued next issue.



mention the risks of living in Angola to someone, and their thoughts usually jump to the danger of land mines. While they undoubtedly cause much death and suffering, we are relatively safe from them. Perhaps surprisingly, Angola's long-running civil war has left Luanda, the capital city, virtually untouched. The victims of the landmines are the poor farmer, forced by hunger to return to his fields, and the young child innocently playing in a country village who comes across a brightly coloured object and who can't resist picking it up.

Luanda is an unsanitary city, heaped with rotting rubbish and awash with muddy mosquito-infested sewage water. Unlike the pioneer missionaries, we take anti-malarial tablets and our house has mosquito screens at the windows. We have to boil and filter our water to make it safe to drink. During the ten months that we have been in Luanda, we have been kept remarkably free from the serious tropical illnesses such as salmonella, typhoid fever and amoebic dysentery

crime occurs, it is often violent. Several people in our church have been killed in recent months, victims of armed robberies. Every shop employs uniformed guards who sit by the door, proudly sporting their weapons. We still haven't quite got used to the sight of shoppers putting their hand guns into a locker at the entrance to the supermarket before starting their weekly shop.

We live on a large site that is owned by the Assemblies of God church. It is a beautiful location, with a view across to rolling hills and the sea. The base itself is very peaceful, consisting of four missionaries' houses, a Bible school with students' accommodation, and a large area of farmland. There are always three armed guards on duty, and a perimeter wall adds to our sense of security. Yet virtually every night we hear the sound of gun shots and hand grenades. The local houses where the materials are stored at night usually have their own armed guards. They fire warnings, designed to scare any would-be robbers away, so we often hear one or two shots. Sometimes, however, it is more in the nature of a running battle. A few weeks ago, we were enjoying a barbecue early one

all the smaller roads are precarious riveted mud tracks filled with sewage and rubbish. Despite this, the Angolans drive as if they are on a Formula 1 racing circuit. Speeding and seemingly suicidal overtaking occur all too frequently. The cars, taxis and lorries are a danger in themselves, most being battered wrecks fit for the breakers yard. They often have broken windscreens, no suspension and no lights, so driving after dark is something we avoid whenever possible. To add to the difficulties, there are no pavements and little children often run out of their houses straight onto the road. Pedestrians often cross without looking or (especially true of teenage boys) with the goading attitude "Hit me if you dare!" On various occasions we have seen dead bodies lying in the road where someone has hit them. The danger for us is that, in Angolan culture, an angry mob will form and kill the driver of the vehicle no matter whose fault it was. Travelling by plane on domestic flights is also dangerous, as many of the aircraft are poorly maintained. On our recent flight to Cabinda, not only were the seats broken but we were very disconcerted to see streaming wisps of vapour from the cloud we were passing through leaking into the cabin. Even when we are on the ground aircraft are a danger to us. At least four Russian cargo planes have crashed here in the last ten months, usually due to being overloaded. One of these hit a residential part of Luanda, just two miles from where we work.

Not all the dangers we face though are man-made. The guards have shot dead various snakes. Our neighbour, Mark, is the proud owner of the skin of one of them, an eight-foot-long boa constrictor. Recently there was a spitting cobra on the steps in front of our house. Simon took one look at it and, remembering Mark 16, promptly squashed its head with his sandalled feet. Unfortunately we can't deal with all the risks we face with such ease; yet we know that God is able to save us and even if he doesn't we will still serve him (Daniel 3:16-18)●

Simon and Karen Collins are BMS workers in Angola



"people in our church have been killed, victims of armed robberies"

which are so common here.

Despite being relatively safe from disease, we still face dangers, most of which, unfortunately, are man-made.

The biggest danger is due to Luanda's crime rate. As a legacy of 32 years of war, guns are widely available. Combined with mass unemployment, overcrowding due to the influx of thousands of refugees and a rate of inflation that is out of control, it is hardly surprising that for many, turning to crime seems the easiest quick-fix solution. After so much war, people view life cheaply – and when

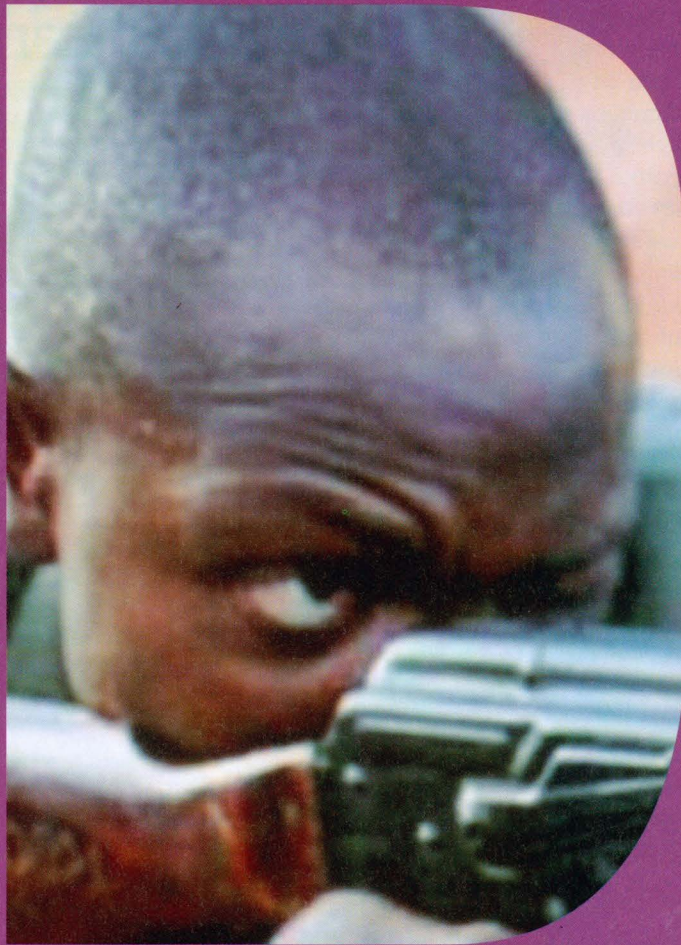
Saturday evening. The weather was sunny and the coals were hotting up nicely. Suddenly, a gun fight

erupted in the market, about 200 yards away. For about 20 minutes, our cooking was accompanied by the sound of pistol shots, bursts from AK47 rifles, and the blast of the occasional hand grenade. We later found out that a drunk soldier had started the trouble, and that the police had then responded. Although we were relatively safe behind our wall, it did lend the proceedings a somewhat surreal air.

Travelling is another danger that we face. In the middle of Luanda large pot holes disfigure most of the streets, and

leaving your comfort zone

danger



disease...

and drunk soldiers

BRAZIL TO ALBANIA

Nurse **Mary Parsons** tells how God led her from one country to another

this is Skenderbeg Square," shouted our team leader, Justine Horsfall. We were on a whistle-stop tour of the city. Who was Skenderbeg? Someone important? The answers were lost in the noise of beeping traffic. Caught in a throng of pedestrians moving in all directions, we sped across the square, avoiding the fast-moving vehicles as we went. Hot sun beat down on our heads as we strained to hear Justine. Money changers plied us with local currency, small boys thrust phone cards in our faces. This was Tirana, Albania's capital city. Was it really only three weeks since I'd waved goodbye to friends in Fortaleza, Brazil?

Some months prior to world-media interest in the Balkans crisis, I read an article about a Brazilian missionary who was working in Albania. It was a moving story of how she had drawn alongside the Albanian people, especially at the time of the civil unrest two years ago. Her testimony led me to pray more for Albania.

My attention was again drawn to Albania when news reports of the horrors in Kosovo flashed onto the TV screen. The March/April BMS News Update, sent regularly to all missionaries, reported BMS folk in Albania had to put aside their regular work to help with the thousands of refugees from Kosovo. At this point prayer concern for Albania and Kosovo led me to consider doing something practical. The first step was to talk and pray with my Brazilian pastor and his wife, and later with the rest of the church. Also with my BMS colleagues and our BMS Regional Secretary Derek

"prayer concern for Albania and Kosovo led me to consider something practical."

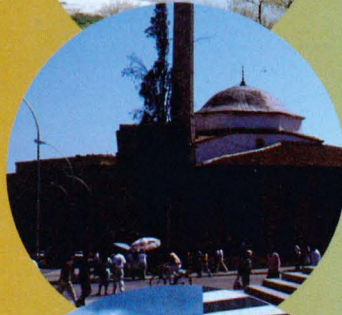
Punchard.

In my letter to BMS, with an offer to help in Albania, I suggested that it might be a crazy idea. The offer of help was taken seriously. There were 15 of us in the BMS Team for Albania. Each has their own story to tell of how God often surprises us out of the routine to serve him in some other way. It may be right where we live or on the other side of the world.

It was hard leaving Fortaleza, friends and colleagues. We had worked and worshipped together for eight years. The move to Albania meant leaving the familiar things behind and giving up one's independence to become part of a team. It involved learning a new language and becoming more vulnerable. (Albania is not considered a safe place to live.)

What am I doing now? Three days a week I'm working at the ABC clinic in Tirana while BMS nurse Yvonne Wheeler is on home assignment. The other two days I spend at the clinic in Durres, opened by Elisabeth Towlson during the Kosovan crisis. I'll be here until I come back to the UK for home assignment in January 2000. ●

Mary Parsons has worked as a nurse in Brazil with BMS from 1972 to 1975 and then from 1985 to now.



Taking a risk for God – is it worth it?

Nick Welford comes clean

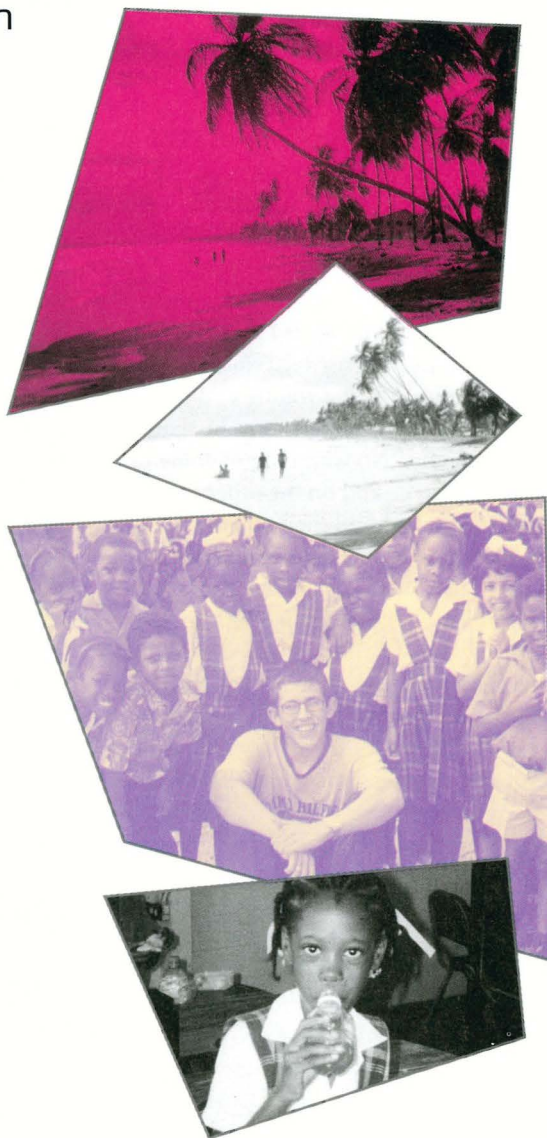
before leaving the UK for Trinidad I was worried about certain things I'd be leaving behind, biggest of these being my two-year old sister. I knew that I would miss a big part of her growing up which wasn't a nice thought for me! I didn't have too many expectations about what it would be like, but was happy to wait and see.

The first uncomfortable thing to hit me was the heat, especially as I had been wearing a jumper on the plane and didn't think to take it off! As far as housing went I don't think we were really out of our comfort zone. We actually lived in one of the nicer areas of Trinidad, one of our rooms had air conditioning, we had a shower, a kitchen and let's not forget the swimming pool! But that was a mixed blessing as the majority of our work was in two poor rural schools.

I found it really hard to go from the extremes of wealth to poverty practically every day. It made me realise how thankful we should be for how God was obviously looking after us in our lives back home and not just in Trinidad. It also made us humble, because of the way the kids were. They would buy us sweets, which for them was a lot to give.

Our visit to the capital, Port of Spain, also moved me out of my comfort zone, mainly because we stayed in a small house right next to a shanty town, but also because I had to share a mattress with team-mate Ben!

Coming home was strange as well and for the first few weeks I found it hard to get back into our concept of poverty in this country. There was one time when I saw some homeless people on the street in Canterbury asking for change, and I couldn't feel



sorry for them because of what they had compared to the children I had been working with. Now I do have compassion for them because they are still poor, especially for this country.

I will never forget my Trinidad experiences – they have changed so much about me for the better and at the end of the day taking the risk was worth it, for God and for me. ●

Nick Welford was a member of 1998/99 BMS Trinidad Action Team



Taking a risk for God – is it worth it?

the task of sharing the good news of the gospel has rarely been an easy one. Modern technology and communications can make it a more comfortable task today, but still great hardships have to be faced. If the gospel is to be taken to the ends of the earth there must be those willing to take a risk for God, and leave their very comfortable comfort zones.

I asked Ken & Ruth, currently in training for service in South Central Asia, to describe their thoughts and feelings about God's calling on their lives. Their country of service is one of the poorest, most restrictive and potentially dangerous places in the world. War, earthquakes, poor agriculture and a lack of foreign investment have left only a shell of a country. A shortage of most of life's basic necessities and the ever present danger of fighting make it a difficult place to live. So what compels a couple to uproot themselves and take their young family to this frightening place?

Ruth answers, "When I hear some of the facts I can be scared and wonder why on earth we are going to such a difficult country, but when I pray it's different to just cold, dangerous facts because it involves my relationship with God. I get a different perspective. Loving God means being willing to do difficult things and obeying. There is no better and happier place to be than obeying God. So I have a tug of war between saying 'No way, I'm not going to such a dangerous place where anything can happen', and on the other hand saying 'God I have to obey you to be close to you and find the happiness of being in your will.' In some ways it's a selfish thing for me. I am going because I won't be happy until I do what God wants of me. While it may be dangerous there, we also know that in many ways it would be far more dangerous to stay here, because we would then be out of the will of God.

"When I was three years old I suffered a serious head injury. God healed me miraculously from that, and ever since I have felt that my life was not my own, that I was living on borrowed time. I know my life is God's and that he has me in his hands, so while physical dangers are still worrying they don't have quite the fear for me that they might."

For Ken there is a different outlook, "The great commission says to make disciples of all nations and we're simply trying to obey that command. I look at history and see the gospel spread out from Jerusalem across the Mediterranean and beyond until reaching the shores of Britain. Those who shared the gospel at that time often faced hostile receptions, most suffering hardship and many paying the ultimate price of martyrdom. As a British person who has benefited by having the gospel preached boldly by such people I feel I have to do my bit so that others can hear and can benefit in the same way I have. There are few more fulfilling things than seeing the someone who doesn't know Christ come to him and nothing is as beneficial for their lives as knowing Jesus as their redeemer.

"Sadly, the most unreached people in the world generally also live in the most dangerous and inhospitable places for a Westerner, so any kind of call to the unreached will usually mean going to a country where life will be at best uncomfortable, and at worst life-threatening. Having said that, it is a frequent wrestle in our minds between wanting to enjoy the relative ease and peace of life in Britain and wanting to go to a country where our personal security, health, relationships and lifestyles will all be at risk.

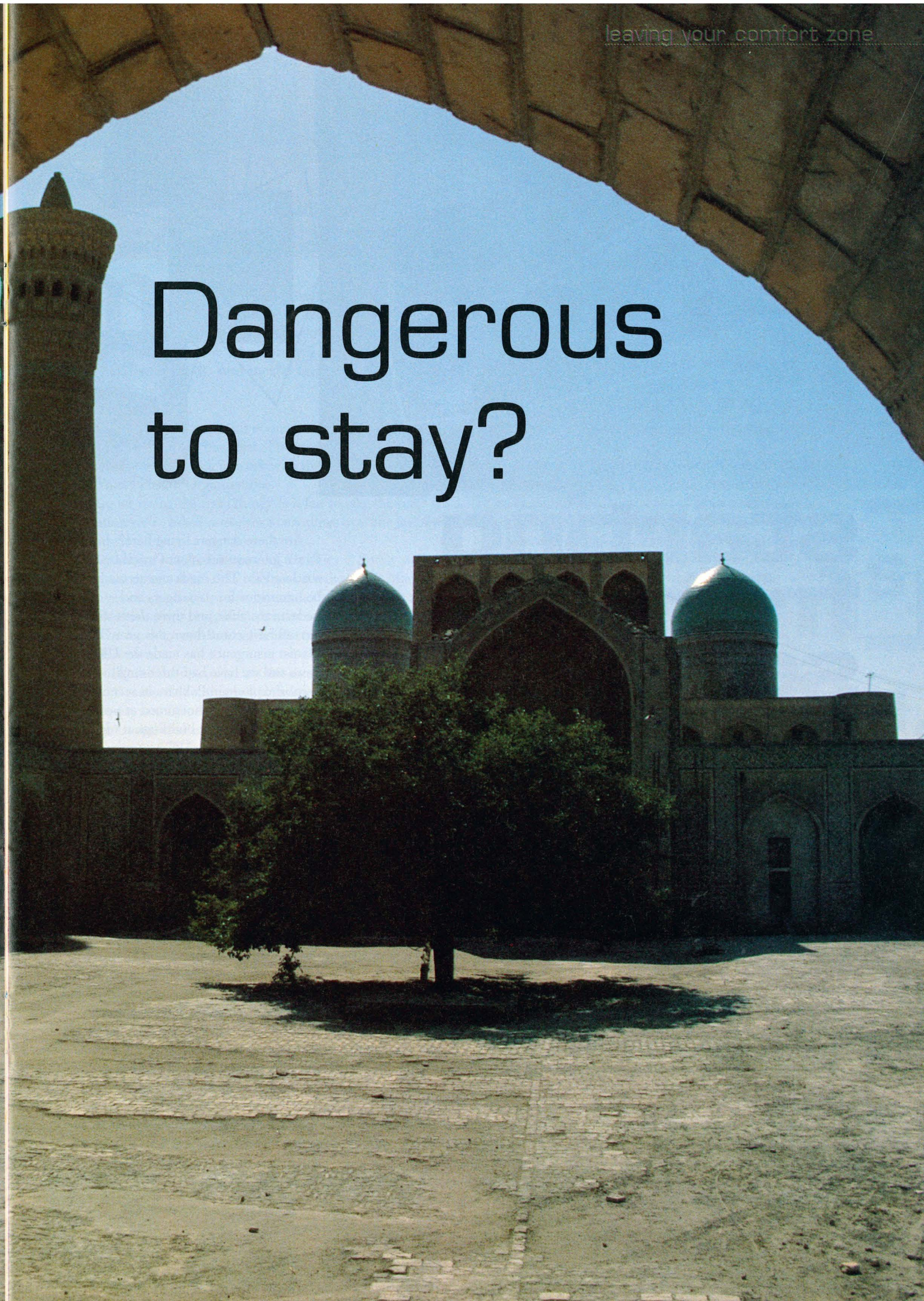
"The Bible gives a strange comfort: 'Rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ'; 'Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.' These give no promise of an easy outcome, nor of God's physical protection, but do help us see that suffering, especially for the gospel has an upside, both for us and for God's glory.

"If we as a couple are willing to give over everything, including each other, our children, our careers, our bacon rolls and trips to the cinema and ultimately our lives, then we will discover the true happiness of being a close disciple of Jesus. God will be glorified and we will see the kingdom come to earth. This godly perspective is what I have to work hard at maintaining; without it I would give it all up and stay home." ●



PEOPLE INTERNATIONAL

Dangerous to stay?





Angela and Paul Foster set off for the hazards of Nepal



starting from scratch

“hello, is that BMS? I've only been a Christian for nine months, but we believe God is calling us to work overseas.....”

Our minds were full of questions; what about Paul's medical career and the consultant post just around the corner? What about the children's education? Their physical safety? What would life be like after leaving family, friends and our church for an unfamiliar land? What were the safety issues and dangers of living in Nepal? And frankly were we up to it?

Moving to Nepal didn't just disturb the balance of our world, but also that of our friends and family. Some relationships grew stronger whilst others were strengthened only after time. Some experienced significant conflict. This was also a time of pain; again and again we fell onto the assurance of God's repeated call –

without which we could not have continued.

Our first year in Nepal has been a very special and exciting time after all the preparation. But it has meant starting everything from scratch. We seemed to have swapped all that was safe and familiar for the unknown and uncertain. When you're missing the closeness of good friends, who do you go and see, what do you say to them? Despite its welcome, church is sometimes a struggle – sitting on the floor for an hour, listening to a sermon you don't understand, or “which song are we singing now, he didn't tell us which number?” We feel like clumsy children as we try to chat to people after the service.

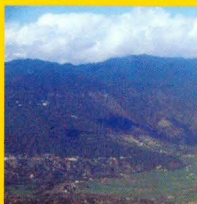
Pokhara itself can be smelly, dusty, polluted, full of rubbish dumps, hot and humid. Our house has concrete floors with rush mats offering some cover. It has no wallpaper, the walls are all cream and the woodwork brown (sadly no ‘hint of peach’).

Are there dangers living here? Paul's job requires a lot of travel by road and air. The roads can certainly be hazardous for passengers and pedestrians alike, and three domestic aircraft have come down this year. The Maoist insurgency has made the UK news and we have had three small bombs explode in Pokhara in recent months. These are not aimed at people but generally empty buildings at night, quite different to the UK's experience in recent times.

But... for us there seem to be fewer issues than back in the UK. We find we live more healthily, take more exercise, and only suffer a rare stomach upset. Pokhara is also beautiful, colourful, has phenomenal views and is populated by such warm people. As for Paul's career, he has found a breadth that wasn't open to him before. The children attend a wonderful Christian school with friends who share their experiences.

Mostly we don't feel that we've left “our comfort zone” – more that we have just exchanged it for another zone with its own benefits and problems. God called us and we responded – surely we need to be within a “zone of obedience to God” whatever that means for each of us, because that is where true comfort or peace will be found. ●

Paul and Angela Foster went to Nepal with BMS in August 1998.



kathmandu..timbuctoo..geneva..?

A search to know God's will.

michael Owen was just four years old. Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister. AIDS was almost unknown, and it was OK to eat British beef. It was January 1984 when we came to Nepal with BMS. And by the time you read this, we'll have left.

Having spent 90 per cent of our working lives in Nepal, we now plan to move to the West. The most likely destination at the moment is Geneva, to work with the Stop TB Initiative in the World Health Organisation.

Are we doing the right thing? Is it fair to take the risk? It's a question we've asked ourselves many times over the last few months.

But where's the risk in moving to Geneva? Surely we'll face far fewer threats there than in Nepal. Earthquakes, Maoist insurgencies, polluted water, landslides, plane crashes and erratic driving are probably less common in Switzerland! Surely we'll be moving out of an unfriendly environment back into our comfort zone.

No. Quite the opposite. It's the comfort zone we're leaving – after 16 years of adapting to a different culture and developing familiarity and friendships, we're moving into unknown areas where several challenges and risks face us.

The risk of disobedience. We believe we have heard God's call to move on, but we also wonder whether our spiritual ears are deceiving us. Is this truly His will?

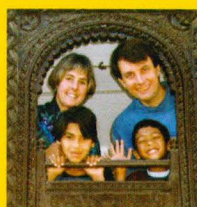
The risk of failure. Will we cope with bigger responsibilities? Promoting effective TB diagnosis and treatment services for a population of 20 million is very different to working for global TB control.

The risk of hurt. The people I work with here are a highly supportive bunch of folks – we get on well together, enjoy each other's company, and work well as a team. The same can't be said for Geneva. The headquarters of many UN agencies are infamous for high levels of politically motivated, selfish and manipulative behaviour. It's a working environment we simply aren't used to.

But perhaps the greatest challenge is the risk of complacency. Affluence, physical comfort, and the material trappings of a western lifestyle can coax us into dullness of mind, stunting our spirituality (but expanding our waistlines!).

The risks are very real, but so are God's promises! ●

Ian and his wife Sally worked with BMS in Nepal from 1984 to 1997. Staying in Kathmandu they then moved on to work for the World Health Organisation.



Don't try this at home!

The popular TV programme "Don't Try This at Home" seems to have captured the imagination of millions of viewers. I think it might prove to be far more entertaining if they turned the tables on these dear 'sponsors' and got them to perform the life-threatening tasks themselves! I must confess, bungee jumping on a bicycle or climbing to the end of a crane 170 feet above the streets of London, are not the kinds of things that I would relish attempting!

Of course, all of the above stunts are carefully monitored and controlled by the experts, so the chances of anything going seriously wrong are minimal. The whole point of the exercise is that people are going to greater and greater lengths to prove their human endurance in the face of death-defying odds.

Translate all the above into church life and there are some interesting parallels. It seems that in the biblical accounts of God's dealing with people, he demanded that they break out into unknown territory before he could demonstrate his power in their lives. It was in the excitement and challenge of moving out beyond their comfort zones, that the people of God discovered the reality of their faith. In these days when science and technology have attempted to usurp the throne of God, we have been seduced by the rules that govern our five senses and have forgotten that there is a spiritual dimension that is unpredictably and gloriously as real! But to lock into it often means that we must consciously place ourselves at the disposal of a God who rarely gives us the whole picture at once.

This is certainly a characteristic of much of our missionary work which by its very nature demands a pioneering spirit. It is probably the best argument for ordinary people like you and me to get out there and experience life in another culture where we don't have our props to lean on.

The world is looking for adventure, thrill and challenge. What better place to find these things than in a life dedicated to following Jesus?

That gives the concept of "Don't Try This at Home" a whole new relevance for our missionary enterprise! ●

Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions



steve



At your age?!



Stanley and Nancy Hornsby head for Budapest
(and they're both in their 60s!)



most of our friends said, "Isn't it exciting?" Stanley had volunteered to teach English in Budapest for a year at the Baptist Theological Academy. My own feeling was, "No; I'm not a bit excited." Let's admit it: sometimes excitement is best at second-hand. I got a lot of pleasure from my sister's holiday in India; but was relieved it was she who got diarrhoea, and it was me safe at home.

Safe? But often when there is no danger or distress we don't even recognise our need of security. Only when the rug is pulled out from under our feet do we cry out, "Lord, save me! I'm perishing!"

So this is what being in Budapest means for us. All the minor crises and the strangeness of this strange language keep sending us back to the Lord. Where else can you go when the electricity goes off, and you have no words to make sentences with, even if you knew where to telephone (if you have a telephone)?

A few friends thought we were rather foolish. I agreed. Especially at our age. But didn't Paul point out that God had chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise? Shouldn't we occasionally – frequently! – do some foolish things?

A week before leaving we had no accommodation and still no details of the Academy dates. But we have a wonderful

"A few friends thought we were rather foolish. I agreed. Especially **at our age**. Shouldn't we occasionally – frequently – do some **foolish things**?"

Hungarian family for friends. They advertised: "Two elderly English teachers need a large flat..." when we arrived, the flat was there, furnished with things from their own homes. What a joy it was to experience their loving care of us! We hoped people from Swanage would come to share our experiences, like the free English lessons/Bible studies. And three intrepid elderly ladies have been our first visitors.

Another friend said, "I hope you'll feel fulfilled..." I'm not sure about that. Jesus just spoke about his father's will, never mentioning self-fulfilment. We just pray the Lord will keep us going.

Maybe, later, looking back from the safety of our home, we'll be able to say, "Well, some of it was exciting – occasionally. And perhaps some of us are the richer for this foolish year." ●

Nancy and Stanley went to Budapest as BMS Volunteers in September 1999. Stanley is teaching English at the Baptist Theological Academy for one year.



The greatest risk of all

by **Chris Mattock**

Going?

at last we were on our way, spurred on by faith in Jesus Christ, an ordination and two valediction services. Setting out to drive to Italy, ordained, commissioned, valedicted, sent out to serve God, sent out into the world to do the will of God.

Of course it felt risky, scary even. So many new things to learn and understand, and with a five-month-old baby in tow. Another language to learn. A different culture to understand. New people to get to know. Would we be overwhelmed by it all? Would we cope? Yet we were sure it was the will of God to go.

Excitedly we went, safe in the knowledge that although we may even risk our lives, God would be with us and guide us by his Holy Spirit. The risks were therefore diminished and became adventures in depending on the grace of God. Even the risk of failure melted away. We were still sometimes confused and angry, lonely, uncomprehending, depressed, scared witless, and on some occasions, in serious danger, but we knew we were doing the will of God. We were reassured that we had been commissioned to be the right people in the right place at the right time. This meant we never took the greatest risk of all, which for anyone, is to go against the will of God. In 'going', in 'being sent', we never took the risk of accepting the call of God but of attempting to serve him in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Returning?

The idea that one may have been 'sent' to the wrong location against the will of God is rarely considered but approaching the subject of returning is different. If being 'sent' is seen as a



"Being called and being sent has only one direction. There is no 'decommissioning' in Matthew 28:19."



confirmation of the call to missionary service, doesn't returning imply a denial of God's call? This is the most serious risk, before which the "trouble, or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword" Paul writes of in Romans 8:35 are insignificant. The human risks of failing those who commissioned us, of failing those whom we seek to serve, of being unable to cope in the face of difficulty is nothing compared to the risk of going against the will of God.

Faced with such an overwhelming risk and yet sensing that returning was the will of God, what else could we do but seek the assistance of Jesus Christ and make ourselves available to be called to serve in the UK.

Beginning the process of returning, required a great leap of faith. It is much easier to 'go' than it is to return. The stakes were higher and the risk greater. The process of being called and being sent has only one direction. There is no 'decommissioning' in Matthew 28:19.

We thank God that the events and timing surrounding our return have fitted together in a way which has rewarded our leap of faith. Most importantly our calling to the pastoral ministry enabling individual Christians and churches to grow, in whatever location we are placed, has been confirmed. Instead being left feeling uneasy and guilty, wondering if we have returned from 'the mission field' too early, our move has been from one missionary situation to another. Our valediction promises have remained true and our return has continued in the direction of our first calling. As we prepare to take up a pastorate in the UK, we thank God for his faithfulness. ●

Chris Mattock and his wife Sarah worked with BMS in Italy and Sicily from 1994 to 1999.



Background

Zagreb is the capital of the Republic of Croatia. It lies in the northern part of the country not far from the Slovenian and Hungarian borders. It has a continental climate, ranging from 32 degrees in mid-summer to -9 degrees in mid winter. It lies between the foothills of the mountain of Medvenica, and the floodplain of the river Sava, some two miles to the south.

Zagreb developed from two adjacent, 900-year-old fortified hill towns, Gradec, under the Hungarian throne and Kaptol, under the Roman Catholic Church. From the 13th to the late 16th centuries the two towns, only some 600 metres apart, fought to protect their political and economic interests. However, they united in the early 17th century under the threat of the Turkish

advance which came within a few miles of the city. Zagreb became the capital of Croatia, but remained under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian province of the Austro-Hungarian empire until the fall of the empire in 1918. Then Croatia united with other south-Slavic states in a bid for greater autonomy to become the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1941 the Germans invaded Zagreb and put in power the fascist, Ustashe leader, Pavlic. He was based in Zagreb, yet many townsfolk supported the antifascist communist Tito. Although Tito, the post-war leader of the new Yugoslavia, was born not far north of the city, Zagreb took second place to Belgrade (Serbia) in the Federal Republic.

Nevertheless, Zagreb continued to grow with numerous residential blocks spreading south over the

river into an area now called New Zagreb. Since Croatian independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, Zagreb has been the capital of the new Republic.

First Impressions

Despite being the capital, Zagreb feels more like a large town than a city. The old town on the hill above the central square, with its weather-worn terracotta-tiled roofs and quiet streets is now home to the parliament and government buildings. Below, by the central square, is the colourful and bustling Dolac market selling meat and fish, brightly coloured flowers and the home-grown produce of country folk along with imported fruit and vegetables. The main shopping and administrative centre is contained between the old city and the station, a quarter of a mile to the south. Here, the grid-

like network of roads divides well manicured parks and large, four or five storey, ochre-rendered Hungarian-style buildings containing flats, businesses and university faculties. The shops are small and modern, but despite their inviting window designs, business could be busier. Looking good is very important to Zagreb people. In the summer months especially, Zagreb streets are alive with fashionably dressed young people with mobile phones sitting out in cafes chatting to friends.

People

Zagreb has a population of 872,355 (approximately a fifth of Croatia's population), of which about 20,500 are displaced persons and refugees, especially from Bosnia, as a result of the war following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the early to mid 90s. While over 90 per cent of Zagreb people are ethnically Croat, all of Croatia's ethnic minority groups are represented in small numbers in Zagreb including Serbs, Muslims, Albanians, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovenians, Montenegrins and Macedonians. The war changed the ethnic mix as people, especially Serbs, left Croatia in the war and other refugees came in, but until the next census in 2001 the exact picture remains unclear.



Economy

Apart from public sector jobs (police, government, and service industries), the main industries involve the manufacture of food, drinks, and chemicals. Pliva, the pharmaceutical company that developed the anti-biotic, Erythromycin, is based in Zagreb. Croatia is trying to cope with the transition from a communist economy as well as recovering from the expense of war and economically life in Zagreb is tough at the moment. A complex chain of debt, including the government, means that businesses are not paid for their services on time and consequently, employers often cannot pay their employees on time.

Taxes are high and over the last

our town: Zagreb

KEY

- 1 Parliament buildings and St Mark's Church
- 2 Central Square & Dolac food market
- 3 Cathedral
- 4 1st Baptist Church of Zagreb
- 5 National theatre
- 6 University faculties
- 7 Maksimira park and zoo
- 8 Main train station
- 9 Our flat
- 10 Jarun recreational & rowing lakes
- 11 2nd Baptist Church
- 12 Croatia, Zagreb F C stadium
- 13 Medvenica mountain
- 14 Botanical gardens
- 15 Zagreb stock exchange

- The old town on the foothills
- Main shopping area
- City parks
- Austro-Hungarian style buildings, flats and businesses
- Modern high rise blocks of New Zagreb
- Industrial area
- deciduous forest
- Wealthier suburbs, modern houses and low rise flats



ten years the cost of living has increased, while peoples' salaries have remained the same. A recent survey showed the cost of living to be the same as Birmingham, but the average net salary is only £270 per month. People, therefore, often have two jobs or a side interest to help subsidise their main job. When people get married, they often have little choice but to live with their in-laws. Unemployment and under-employment are high. It is especially difficult for non-Croats to get a job.

Employment and Social System

Zagreb has good health and education services. The social system is overstretched at the moment. Unemployed people get free basic health care and cheaper transport passes and there are some other basic benefits depending on their circumstances. If a person loses their job having been employed for 12 months, they can claim a small amount of unemployment benefit

(maximum amount of £60 per month) for six months only. Other help includes a winter fuel allowance and a potato and cabbage allowance.

Leisure

Saturday morning is the time to meet friends for a coffee in town. Family is important and many people visit relatives for Sunday lunch. As well as a number of cinemas and theatres, Zagreb has lots of sports facilities – olympic-sized swimming pools, an ice rink, tennis courts, fitness studios and a large rowing lake called Jarun. The major sports are football, basketball and handball. The thick, deciduous forest on Medvenica mountain behind Zagreb has some beautiful walks as well as a few short ski runs in the winter. On the other side of the mountain, a half-hour drive away, are thermal spas.

Religion

Croatia is a Catholic country and so there are many Catholic churches in Zagreb as well as a

Serbian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox. There are also a number of Protestant churches including two Baptist churches, (the central one with 250 members and a church plant of 50 members), four or five Pentecostal/Evangelical churches, Brethren, Lutheran and Seventh Day Adventists. There is also a Muslim community and a small remnant of a Jewish community. Up to 90 per cent of people in Zagreb claim to be Catholic, but only about 25 per cent of these people would regularly attend Mass. Since the fall of communism in the early 90s, all churches have seen a renewed interest in religion. This can be put down to two reasons. Firstly, people who grew up in an atheistic environment have a new freedom to explore their religious roots and many people have become Christians and been baptised. A renewed general spiritual interest has also encouraged the growth of new age ideology and major sects (there are more Jehovah's Witnesses than Protestant

Below: Zeljko & Sijetlana Mraz

Zagreb Baptist Church in Radiceva street showing people mingling after a service



groups). Secondly, religion has become trendy, an expression of national identity and a way to climb up the social and political ladder. Catholicism distinguishes Croats from Orthodox Serbs. Therefore, to be a good Croatian is to be a good Catholic and so religious education in schools is now compulsory. Many national leaders who wouldn't have been seen near a church under Communism are now going to church since it helps promote social and political mobility. In some respects, the Church has replaced Communist party membership.



opened. As well as the developing work in Croatia, the Croatian Baptist Union feels a special burden to support Baptist work in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Profile:

Zeljko & Sijetlana Mraz

Zeljko Mraz became General Secretary of the Croatian Baptist Union while still a theological student at the seminary in Osijek in 1995. Prior to this, while working in insurance, he co-founded the first Baptist local mission organisation that went on to supply some of the first

conditions for their work. The Union now has nine full-time workers, seven of whom are pastors, one missionary couple who work in Sarajevo, Bosnia and five part-time workers. He also spends a good deal of time contacting and visiting the Baptist churches and mission stations in the country and their leaders, trying to build a sense of fellowship. Along with colleagues on the executive committee, he works to promote the work of Baptists in the country and also to link with Baptist groups outside the country.

Zeljko & Sijetlana have been married for ten years. Sijetlana was a pre-school teacher before going to theological seminary, but now co-ordinates the Baptist Union's youth and children's work. The focus of this work are the summer camps at the coast for children and teenagers. Over the last five years, 1,000 young people have gone to the camps, 40 per cent of whom were from a non-Baptist or non-church background. Through these camps many young people have made some significant steps in their journey with God. In a country where Baptists are not widely known, they are especially important for

children from small churches to feel a sense of belonging to a broader Baptist community and to mix with others of their age. Sijetlana & Zeljko are also active in the central Zagreb Baptist church – Sijetlana leading the youth activities, and Zeljko is a deacon and Bible Study leader. ●

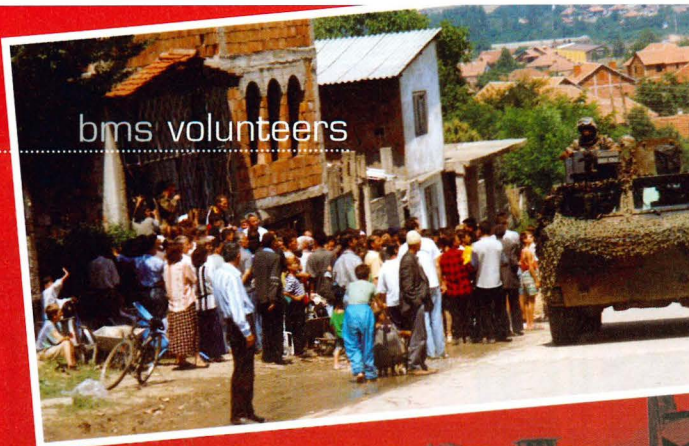
Baptists

Baptists have existed in Croatia for over 100 years. Under Communism (from World War Two to 1989), Baptist witness was constrained by strict control on religious freedom. However, over the last ten years the churches have begun to grow at a faster rate, in part due to the new-found freedom and in part due to goodwill generated by the churches' response to need caused by the war. Over this period the church has grown from 1,000 to 2,000 members, from 21 to 41 churches and in the last year alone, 12 preaching points (potential new churches) were



humanitarian aid in the war and between 1993 and 1995 was a youth worker for the Union. He is now supported by BMS.

Zeljko's main role as General Secretary is to care for the growing number of Croatian Baptist ministers in this growing Union and help provide good



PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX SMITH

In July 1999, 15 volunteers went to Albania to work with thousands of refugees flooding into the country as a result of the Balkans crisis. Four of those team members accompanied returning refugees into Kosovo for five weeks. This article is taken from an interview with team member Rod Bradley, from Taunton.

We were literally going into the unknown, accompanying a convoy of lorries taking food and other humanitarian relief into Kosovo to set up a new warehouse. The people who had made their way to Tirana, the capital of Albania, had mostly been registered and had their names on computer. Most of these came from the Kosovar city of Gjakova and so that city was chosen for this work.

For the first two or three weeks we set about checking addresses, mapping out the area and getting together a list of people so that we could deliver food to and follow them up from the Tirana work. Work in the warehouse could be laborious – for example hand-stamping addresses into 4,000 children's Bibles.

The country is predominantly Muslim, and most of the people who grew up under the Communism regime are nominal Muslims. But when we visited homes, we would ask people if they would like to come to our house on Sunday because we were going to set up a church. We also prayed with people and handed them gospel tracts. The first Sunday, 29 people plus some children arrived. By the following week there were 50 or more people and lots of restless children, so I suggested we begin a Sunday School. We began the next week with 21 children and did the story of Noah's Ark – I learnt lots of Albanian animal words! Soon the house became too small and we cleaned up a disused supermarket for the church, taking the children to the house instead. We began walking to the house with 30 children, and arrived with over

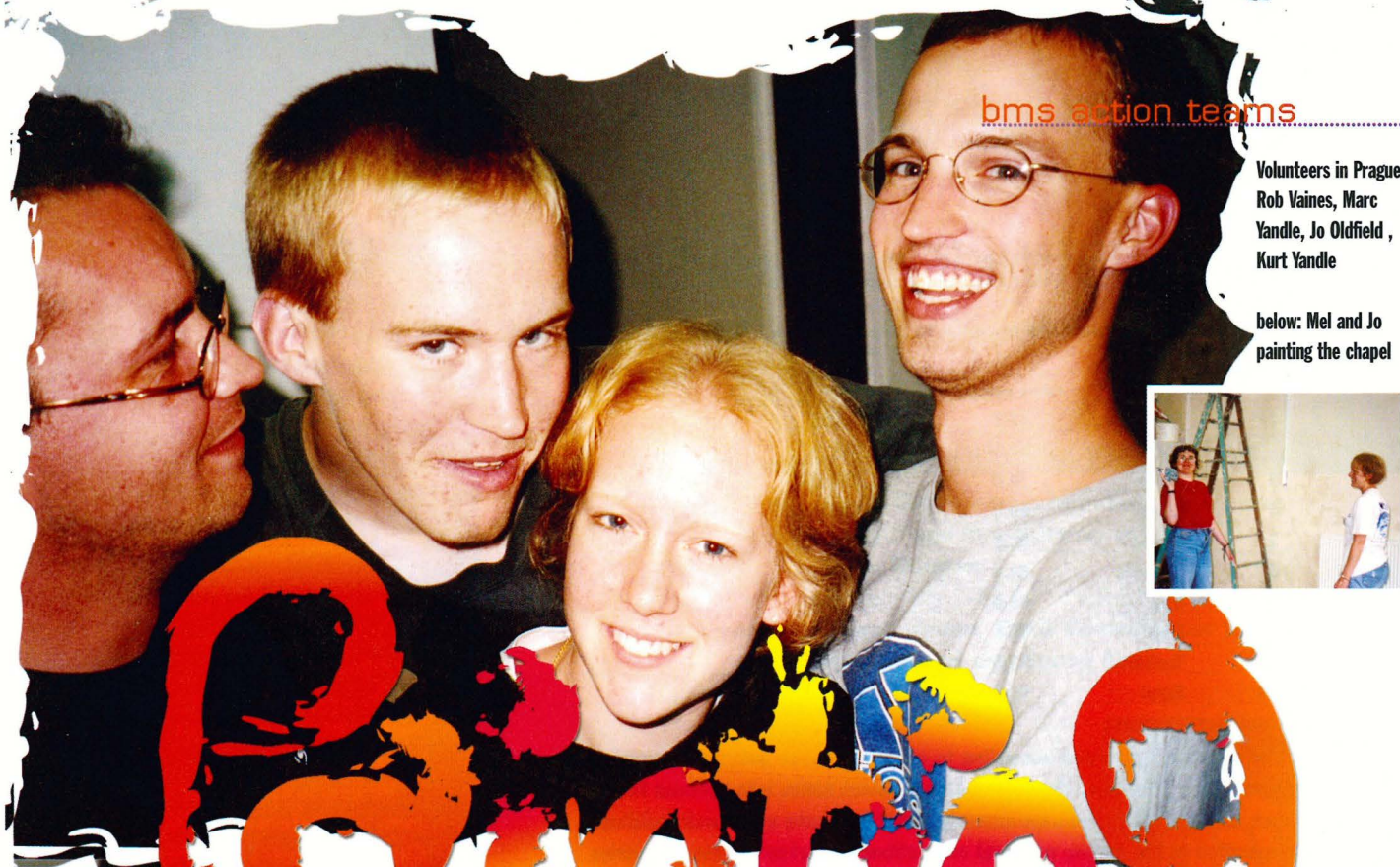
50! We did the story of Jonah followed by some craft activities. There were very few crayons and only two pairs of scissors between 50 children, but they were very patient and waited their turn.

Many of the people now in the church are those whose homes I had visited. One old man's home had been completely burnt out. We sat in his garage on an orange box, sharing a coffee. This man, in his early 60s, told me it would take ten to 12 years to rebuild his home, but he was determined to finish it before he died. I prayed with him then. That first Sunday I was so happy to see him come to the church, and I understand he still attends regularly. Another couple heard me speaking English and invited me to their home for dinner, giving me everything they had. Their son, Bart, spoke good English and I gave him a Bible. Later I was invited back for coffee and Bart said he had been reading it and asked me to tell him more about being a Christian and how it would be different from him becoming a Buddhist. My goodness... quick prayer! Then I spoke to him. I have now heard that although he is not yet a Christian, he is very close and his cousin became one of our church's earliest converts.

Since coming back to the UK I have heard that the church has continued to grow and has moved to a local school. An Albanian is helping to run the work, and the church has two services each week to fit everyone – 390 adults and 320 children – in! ●



Rod Bradley is a deacon of Taunton Baptist Church



bms action teams

Volunteers in Prague:
Rob Vaines, Marc
Yandle, Jo Oldfield,
Kurt Yandle

below: Mel and Jo
painting the chapel



Jo Oldfield speaks of how she learned to trust God through her time on a BMS summer team

for God

the moment I knew I would be spending my summer abroad, I realised that God had a plan for my life that he would never completely show me; all I knew was that my job was to get stuck in! As I was looking into the possibility of going on a mission, I wanted to make sure it was the right thing for me to be doing. I spent a lot of time praying and making enquiries, and then, unexpectedly, I was made an offer of some money to go on a mission to the Czech Republic. As I found out more about it, everything just seemed to fit into place perfectly, and before I knew it, I was on the plane to Prague.

In July of 1999, a team of four of us flew out to the Czech Republic for a four-week long practical mission, at the International Baptist Theological Seminary, just outside the centre of Prague. Our work was very much based

around maintaining the Seminary's grounds and buildings, and undertaking new projects to create more facilities on the campus. Whilst we were there, the Seminary also had its jubilee celebrations and so we became very much involved in the preparations for that too.

My first project was painting the chapel. At first I was a little daunted by the task as you can imagine! I had never before been placed in the situation of having to organise a task such as this, without being directed in some way by another person. I didn't know quite what to expect from myself, but I was able to develop a certain confidence from the experience that I didn't know I had, and I realised that I could take responsibility for my work and the work of others. I spent much of the next three weeks painting, and I found that I could spend most of this time being close to God, and doing a lot of thinking for myself.

During our time in Prague we worked with several groups of

volunteers from America and all over the world, and developed new friendships that have remained strong since our return. I think the most incredible part of my mission abroad was meeting with people, all with completely different backgrounds, but all wanting to worship the same God. To hear how God had touched each of their lives. To listen to the terrible situations that they had been faced with, and delivered from!

I am now no longer scared of what God has planned for my life. I used to be terrified to give everything to him and to have to trust him with my life. I thought I would lose my independence if I did that. However I realised that I can still be independent from others, which is very much my character, but I never want to be independent from God. I know that with God's help there are no limitations and that I can do anything that he leads me to do. ●

Jo Oldfield is a member of Mutley Baptist Church, Plymouth

How comfortable is your comfort zone?

Least comfortable countries in which to be a Christian

		Points awarded*	Number of Christians in country
1	Saudi Arabia	81.5	600,000
2	Afghanistan	72.5	2,500
3	Sudan	70.0	4,800,000
4	China	69.0	60,000,000
5	Yemen	66.5	5,000
6	Morocco	64.0	25,000
7	Iran	63.0	200,000
8	Libya	62.5	140,000
9	Tunisia	62.0	10,000
10	Egypt	60.0	8,000,000

*The points are awarded according to ratings given to questions compiled by Open Doors. They have developed a scale which takes into account factors such as legal restrictions on meeting for worship and on church buildings; opposition in the media; personal restrictions of movement etc. Countries with a score of 9.5 or less generally have freedom of religion. There are 88 countries with a score of ten or more.

KEY

- Not known or not available
- Under 10
- 10 - 29
- 30 - 49
- 50 and over

On 23 January 1999 an historic meeting took place between the main Church leaders in the Middle East. There was just one item on the agenda (one problem that was confronting them all): the countries of the Middle East are rapidly losing their Christian communities.

For example:

In Lebanon conservative estimates show at least 650,000 Christians have left since 1975.

In Jerusalem there were 31,000 Christians in 1948; only 10,000 by 1967, and only a few thousand today.

The Gulf War and Kurdish expansion to the South provoked a mass exodus of Christians in Iraq.

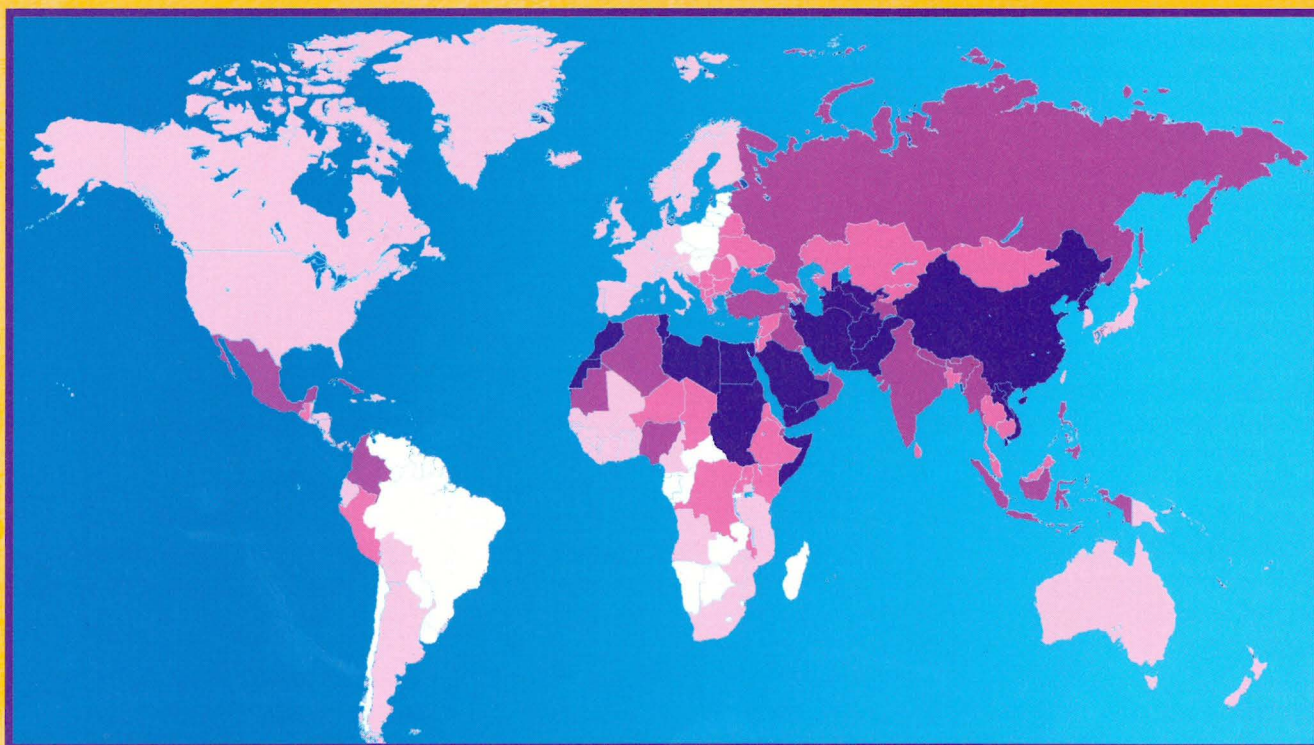
No figures exist as such for Egypt but every year between 15,000 and 40,000 Christians convert to Islam because of social and political pressure. (*Open Doors*)

"A martyr is a believer in Christ who loses his or her life prematurely in a situation of witness as a result of human hostility."

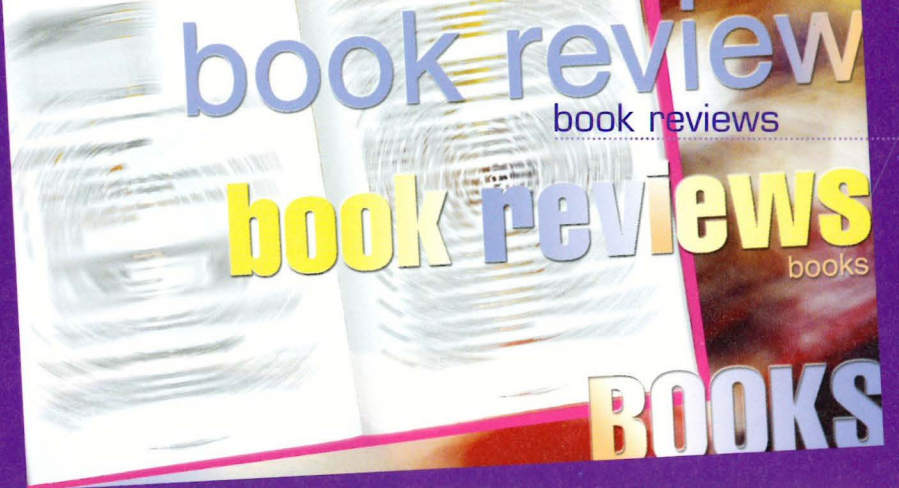
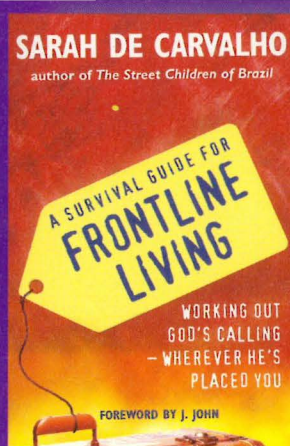
Definition by David B Barrett, world church historian/missiologist.

Barrett suggests that for the 1990s the average rate of martyrdom is about 159,000 Christians per year.

Least comfortable countries to be a Christian



Idea based on map from Atlas of Christianity, by Peter Brierley and Heather Wraight, Christian Research and OM Publishing



Book Title: **A Survival Guide for Frontline Living**
Author: **Sarah de Carvalho**
Publisher: **Hodder & Stoughton**
 (ISBN 0 340 74545 2)
Reviewer: **Jan Kendall, Editor *mh***
No of pages: **307**
Price: **£5.99**

So, another 'practical guide to doing God's will' to join the rest on the bookshelf, that either weren't very practical, or their authors lived in a very different world to the one I lived and moved in?

No, not this time. This book really was good!

The author, Sarah de Carvalho, is following on from her first book, *The Street Children of Brazil*, a testimony of how God called her out of her comfortable lifestyle as a successful TV and film producer to go to Brazil to work with street children. De Carvalho uses her experiences to bring into being this book: described by J John in the Introduction as 'teaching for the children of God'.

It's an easy read, but not a comfortable one. I found myself challenged time and time again by the author's unpacking of issues all Christians face wherever they are situated: issues such as fulfilling our calling; hearing God speak; faith and financial challenges; supporting those in ministry; undoing Satan's work; learning to live in a different culture; feeling lonely, tired and disheartened; enjoying yourself; struggling with leaders and colleagues; and how God uses the desert places in our lives.

Each chapter has lots of sub-headings, so you can read it through in one sitting or pick it up and put it down lots of times. There's also a summary of key points at the end of each chapter to reinforce what's already been said, and right at the end of the book, there's space for the reader to apply the teaching in the book to his or her own life. So there's no escaping it's not just a read – it's a life application. In fact there are bits I want to go back and read over again, and reflect on. The first read wasn't enough!

Although not hinted at in the publicity, I think also with a bit of adaptation, this book could be used as a basis for housegroup study.

All in all, worth every penny, and I'd agree with J John, 'If you don't want to be challenged, then close this book.'

Book Title: **Good News about Injustice: A witness of courage in a hurting world**
Author: **Gary Haugen**
Publisher: **IVP** (ISBN 0-85111-598-5)
Reviewer: **Simon Jones, BMS Co-ordinator for London and the South East**
No of pages: **200**
Price: **£7.99**

Eight year old Shama works a 13 hour shift making cigarettes in an ill-lit factory for 35p a day. She was forced into this job – and hence to forfeit any chance of school – because a medical emergency forced her family to borrow £15 from a local money lender. The price for the loan was Shama's incarceration as a bonded labourer. Her family will never be able to pay off the debt.

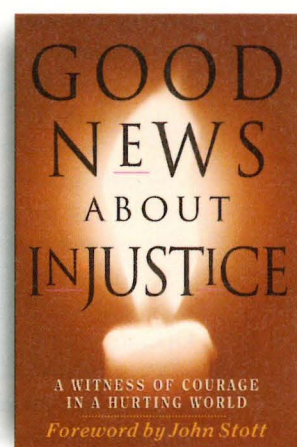
This and other injustices are the core of this powerful, disturbing, life-changing book. Haugen, an American lawyer, has confronted the evil men do on every continent. With the United Nations he unearthed the remains of the victims of the Rwanda genocide and sought to compile evidence against the perpetrators. As a member of the International Justice Mission he has helped women escape sex slavery in Asia and bonded labour in the Philippines.

And now he has written a book that challenges Christians to take seriously God's command that we act for justice and against oppression in his world.

The book is full of heart-breaking stories, movingly and compellingly told. I found myself pausing as I read to fight back the tears and contain the anger I felt at what men – and it almost invariably is men – do in the exercise of power and for the creation and hoarding of wealth.

But it is also a book full of practical things that Christians can do to fight injustice, and free its captives from lives of darkness. Haugen brilliantly expounds what scripture has to say about justice – not just that God thinks justice is a good thing but that his people should have the fight for justice at the top of their priorities. In very practical ways Haugen shows how we can turn our reading of scripture into a lifestyle that defends the weak and frees the oppressed. The final chapter is worth the price of book on its own.

If Christians were to read this book and take its message to heart, the millions like Shama could look forward to a better future.



PROJECTS UPDATE



Streets Ahead paving the way for a new generation

Baptist churches and other groups up and down the UK celebrated Harvest last year serving frango azetona (chicken and olives Brazilian-style) at their harvest suppers, Brazilian evenings and special fundraising projects – all for Streets Ahead, the harvest appeal from BMS and Operation Agri.

Using ideas from the Harvest project book people of all ages joined in making favelas, or shanty towns in their churches. They watched the award-winning Streets Ahead video, narrated by Steve Chalke. They prayed for street kids and the visionary work of Stuart and Georgie Christine, initiators of the Urban Impact project in São Paulo, Brazil. They gave from their pockets and their wallets.

So far £165,000 has come in as a result of this Harvest Appeal – a record-breaking amount.

If you have been meaning to send your Harvest Appeal money in to BMS, but haven't got round to it yet, it's not too late. Please make sure any donations are accompanied by a remittance slip and cheques are made payable to BMS/OA Harvest Appeal. Send to BMS/OA Harvest Appeal, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA.



Margaret Gibbs: Durres, Albania

Teaching was put on hold for Margaret when the Albanian Bible Institute (ABI) was closed down for several months at the height of the Balkans crisis. The building was made available to Kosovar refugee families flooding into the area and many staff and students were involved in providing meals for those living there and in nearby camps. Now the families have returned to what remains of their homes and life in Albania is back to what passes for normal. Margaret's responsibilities at ABI include co-ordinating and developing worship, encouraging the students to take a full part in worship, pastoral care for the female students and teaching English and some Bible courses. Her personal priority however is to improve her Albanian for the sake of work and relationships which are so important in Albania.



especially the first years who have little academic background and are struggling

for good relationships between the students and with Margaret and her colleagues

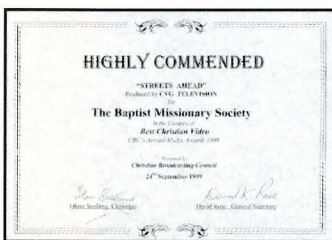
Mark and Andrea Hotchkin: Conakry, Republic of Guinea

Doctors Mark and Andrea are seconded by BMS to work with the Leprosy Mission. Leprosy as a disease, marks out its victims by disabilities, especially in their limbs, so that they are often rejected by society and so lose their livelihoods. There is hope however. Mark is pleased to see more people coming forward for operations and rehabilitation that can change lives.

In 1999, his operations for performing tendon transfers to



straighten clawed hands doubled, and so allowed patients to reintegrate into society and begin using their hands to make items for sale to earn a living. A film of the work has been made to be shown on TV and sent out on video to outlying areas to raise awareness of the treatment that is available.



The Christian Broadcasting Council highly commended BMS and CVG Television, for the Streets Ahead video production, in CBC's Annual Media Awards

Please pray:

- for discipline in learning the language
- for the students at ABI,



Andrea works part-time at the District Hospital, a task made difficult as there are rarely any drugs in the pharmacy. Organising an operation is complicated by having to give the patients a prescription for not only the drugs, but swabs, syringes and gloves. Andrea does a great deal of work operating on women damaged by difficult births often undergone with no medical aid.

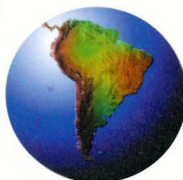
Please pray:

P that news of the treatments available would reach all people affected by leprosy and that they would seek out help

P for safety – although generally unreported in the West, there are many human rights abuses taking place in the dispute between Guinea and Liberia

Andy and Linda Eaves: Baturité, Brazil

For the past five years, Andy and Linda have been involved in community work in Brazil, first in São Paulo and now in



Baturité, a little south of Fortaleza in the North-east. Community outreach is a creative ministry and one idea the couple and their church have implemented is a table in the Saturday morning market called the Prayer Point. Leaflets on the Christian faith, as well as New Testaments, are available to any who want to know more, and the Eaves have found it an excellent way to meet people, explain why they are in Brazil, answer questions and to pray for people. One conversation with a group of teenage lads resulted in them agreeing to set up a meeting for 15 to 20-year-olds on Friday nights. Their first meeting saw eight young men attending and the Eaves are praying for numerical and spiritual growth in the group called 'Hora H' (The Crunch).

Please pray:

P for the many Bible studies Andy and Linda are running with neighbours and other thus far non-Christian contacts

P for continued health and safety for the whole family

P for the young people attending 'Hora H' and for others who might be thinking of going along

Gerry and Johann Myhill: Curitiba, Brazil

Gerry and Johann returned to Brazil from UK Home Assignment in November, to move into a new placement and a new home. Previously based in the southern coastal town of Antonina, the couple have moved further inland to

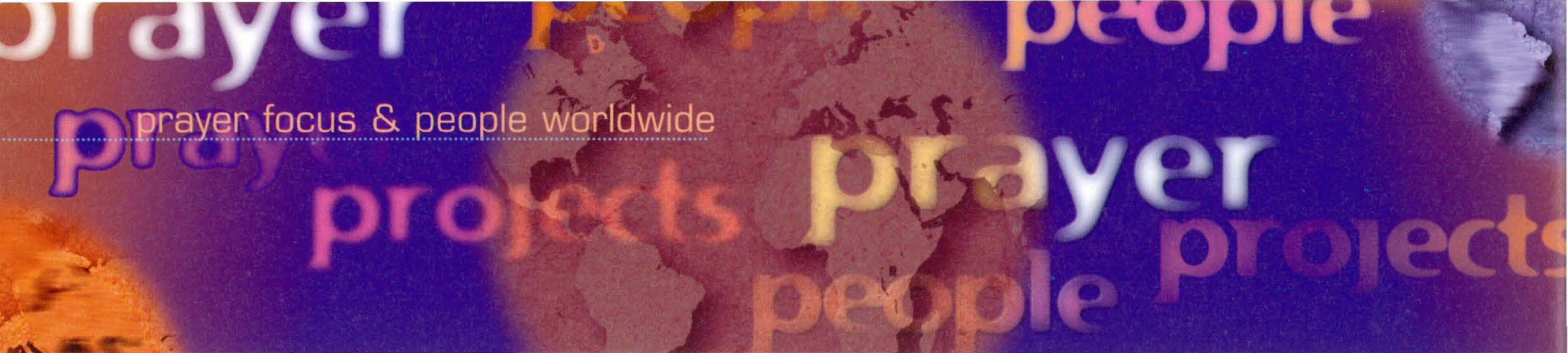


Curitiba, the capital of Paraná State, where Gerry has taken up the post of President/Director of the Paraná Baptist Convention's Social Action Department. Part of Gerry's role will be to plan for the Convention's centenary celebrations in 2003, marking 100 years of Baptist work in Paraná. The Social Action Department's aim is to initiate 100 new projects, making Gerry not only responsible for strengthening and developing existing projects, but also for encouraging churches not already involved to find practical ways of reaching out into their own communities. Despite their move, Gerry and Johann will also continue their work on the islands in the Bay of Paranaguá where there are many poor and needy communities. There are several Baptist churches there but they are fraught with problems because of the lack of educational facilities on the islands resulting, the Myhills say, in 'illiteracy and ignorance as well as inadequate leadership'.

Please pray

P for safety in travel, which will be a large part of Gerry's new role





P for wisdom, visionary ability and initiative in working on ideas for the centenary

P health and strength for both as they take on additional responsibilities

BMS personnel introduce some friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

Jairo Alves

Jairo is the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Jacupiranga, in the state of



São Paulo.

He felt called to the ministry at the age of 12, but when the time came for his national service, the call was forgotten. Jairo imagined his future lay in the Army but whilst in the Army he developed cancer. The first person he told about it was his pastor, BMS missionary John Dyer, who persuaded

him to remain calm – saying the Lord had a purpose in this.

John visited him often and even brought his parents, who lived 60 miles away, to the hospital. Jairo spent three months in hospital, and was given only two years to live. He told John “If I leave hospital walking, I will start preparing myself for Seminary training.”

Jairo did leave hospital, completed his schooling and then went on to Seminary. He said, “I know God calls and equips. Many times we don’t answer the call, or we don’t think it’s important. Then God uses his servants to help those who have not understood their call.”

Today Jairo has been in the ministry for nearly eight years.

John Dyer, Co-ordinator of theological education with BMS in Brazil

Shah Alam

As a child Shah Alam was badly mauled by a jackal. As a result he had a badly disfigured face, and was unable to go to school. He ended up as a beggar on an inland river ferry, wearing a handkerchief around his neck, to catch the dribbles.

In the mid 1980s, when he was eight, he was spotted by Stephen, a member of the British High Commission staff, when he made regular visits to the area. Stephen alerted Bob Hart, the BMS surgeon in Chandraghona at that time, and as a consequence Shah Alam underwent plastic surgery to reconstruct his face. For several months he lived in the Leprosy Hospital as he was so badly



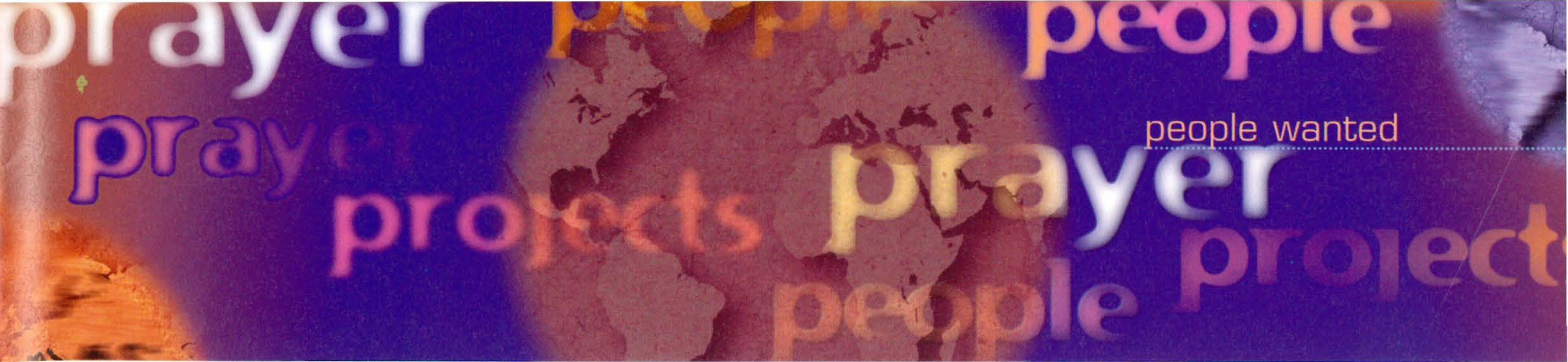
scarred, and felt more comfortable there.

Bob Hart left Chandraghona in the late 1980s and his place was taken by Ron Hiles. Ron always made time to operate on Shah Alam when he made his yearly visits to the Dhaka hospitals.

Sue Headlam unexpectedly met Shah Alam again last year – in Bristol! He was in the UK for more surgery, and happened to be in the same hospital as her mother. A reunion was planned. Bob and Mary Hart, Ron and Jean Hiles, Sue and Shah Alam met up again over a Bangladeshi meal. While in Bristol Shah Alam had learnt good English, been a Rover Scout and had become computer literate.

He returned to Bangladesh last September to complete his education and look for work.

Sue Headlam, BMS community nurse in Chandraghona, Bangladesh



People Wanted

Could this be you?

Albania

Ministers

Ministers or ministerial couples needed for general church work. Many new exciting opportunities for church planting; discipling new Christians; identifying and working with future church leaders. Work within cities, towns or rural settings. Each minister, after completing language and orientation, would be working on his/her own but would be part of an overall ministry team working within the country. Opportunities for both experienced and recently qualified ministers

South Central Asia

Ophthalmic Nurses

Needed to teach, supervise and work in co-operation with national staff in the hospital setting. Nurses with an ophthalmic speciality are required with either operating theatre or eye work experience.

Ultrasonologist or Radiologist

There will be a strong emphasis on teaching so this person would need to be able to teach and train other members of staff.

Nepal

Confidential Secretary

to the Personnel Director. The job will include word processing, correspondence, filing and other personal assistant duties. Ability to work on own initiative essential. Secretarial qualifications, plus two years' experience as a Personal Assistant

South Central Asia

Ophthalmic Specialists

Needed to teach and demonstrate appropriate skills in speciality (basic eye care, optical, or optometry) and work in co-operation with national staff in an eye hospital/or community based eye project.

Thailand

Ministers

Ministerial couples urgently needed, one of whom would ultimately be involved in Theological Seminary education.

North Africa

Occupational Therapists

To train North African counterparts in day-to-day work with disabled children.

Want to know more? Please see page 35 for ways of contacting us

New personnel

Ewoud and Nicola Bos

Both doctors, Ewoud and Nicola are hoping to work in North Africa in community paediatrics. Currently Ewoud is a Senior Registrar in Community Paediatrics at the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital, and Nicola works part-time as a GP in her local health centre at Didcot, Oxon. They will leave for France in January 2000 to begin French language training, subject to their acceptance by ACT.



Mark and Ruth Warner

Mark is a pastor and Ruth, a British Sign Language tutor. Mark comes with a wealth of ministerial experience and Ruth has done a lot for the deaf community. They have been accepted by BMS and will be in ministerial service in France, beginning their language study in January 2000.

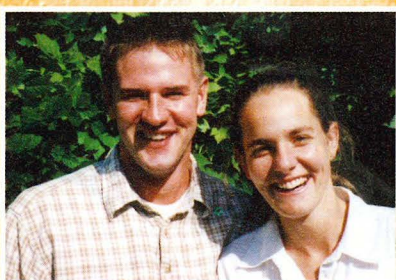


Mat and Hannah Wilson

Mat makes history as he is the first BMS Action Team member to join up as a long-term worker. He went on an Action Team to Jamaica in 1992/3, followed by a Sociology course at University, and then to Spurgeon's College where he is studying to become a Baptist minister.

Hannah is a hospital social worker from Histon Baptist Church. Both have been involved in a number of community projects.

Mat and Hannah have been accepted to work with BMS in Thailand, and will go there in January 2001 once Mat's course is completed.



Iain Gordon recovered

BMS worker Iain Gordon is now back in Kathmandu, where he continues his recuperation from a situation in which he was fighting for his life.

Septicaemia and severe pneumonia developed following a routine operation on his back. All around the world people prayed for Iain and he recovered miraculously. His lungs cleared; his walking got less shaky but his back problem remained. Iain then underwent a second spinal operation, which was successful.

Iain was discharged from hospital in Singapore within a week of the operation. His physician said to his wife Karen, "I have never in all my years practising medicine seen anyone recover as quickly from such a severe ICU illness as your husband has just done."

1979 he was elected Vice Chairman of BMS, and new General Secretary in 1982. Alistair Brown, current BMS General Director said, "He was a tireless and gifted worker for the cause of world mission. BMS today owes much to his 14 years as General Secretary/Director. His passion for making Jesus known throughout the earth was infectious, and he was a significant figure among Baptists round the world in developing co-operative missiological strategies for reaching the lost."

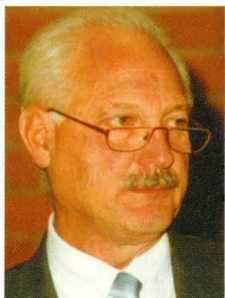
New Director IMC

Alan Pain becomes the first Director of IMC, having spent 22 years as a minister of Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church. He has travelled extensively overseas, especially to South Africa, and brings strong teaching and leadership gifts.

Reg Harvey (1934 - 99)

Reg Harvey, retired General Secretary/Director of BMS died suddenly on 2 November in Cyprus after a heart attack. He was on holiday at the time with his wife Maire.

Reg's service with BMS began when he was chosen to be a member of General Committee. At that time he was a pastor of a local church. He then went on to serve on Candidate Board, becoming its chairman. In



New Manager IMC

Sue Jackson will be the new Manager for Mission Training at IMC. She is well qualified, and has considerable communication gifts. She has been a missionary with BMS, along with husband David, working since 1986 in Brazil, and for the last two years in Sri Lanka. Much of her work has been teaching in the seminary and undertaking curriculum development.

Baptist House News



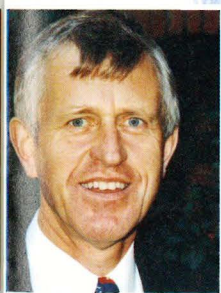
New Director of Finance and Administration

David Locke - formerly Senior Manager with Ernst & Young - becomes the new BMS Director of Finance and Administration.

David, a keen church member at King's Norton Baptist Church, has a strong sense of calling to his new work. He says at times he wondered, "Why has God given me finance, business and IT skills when my heart is with missionary and pastoral work?"

Nick Bradshaw

BMS Co-ordinator for South and Central Wales now has a new address and tel no:
10 Purcell Road
Penarth
South Glamorgan
Wales CF64 3QL
Tel 02920 703738



Check Out January/February 2000

January 2000

Arrivals

David and Ann MacFarlane from Barletta, Italy

Departures

Margaret Swires to Natal, Brazil

David and Ann MacFarlane to Barletta, Italy

Sheila Loader to Tansen, Nepal

Phillip and Vivienne Hatton to Brussels, Belgium

Ewoud and Nicola Bos to Massy, France

Mark and Ruth Warner to Massy, France

Rachel Moss to Pokhara, Nepal

Rebecca Pearce to Pokhara, Nepal

Julie Russell to Pokhara, Nepal

February 2000

Arrivals

John and Lidia Pullin from Campo Grande, Brazil

Caroline & Tim Trimble from Kathmandu, Nepal

Departures

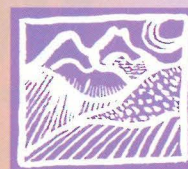
David and Yvonne Wheeler to Tirana, Albania

Tim and Rosimar Deller to Goiânia, Brazil



Sue Jackson

Signs and Blunders



"We have Nepali lessons every day, and are making reasonable progress with the language. But there is the occasional blunder like telling a lady that 'compared to someone else's food, your's is not at all tasty!' or 'we have not been to your town and actually we never want to go either!'"

Simon and Kate Harry, teachers with BMS in Nepal

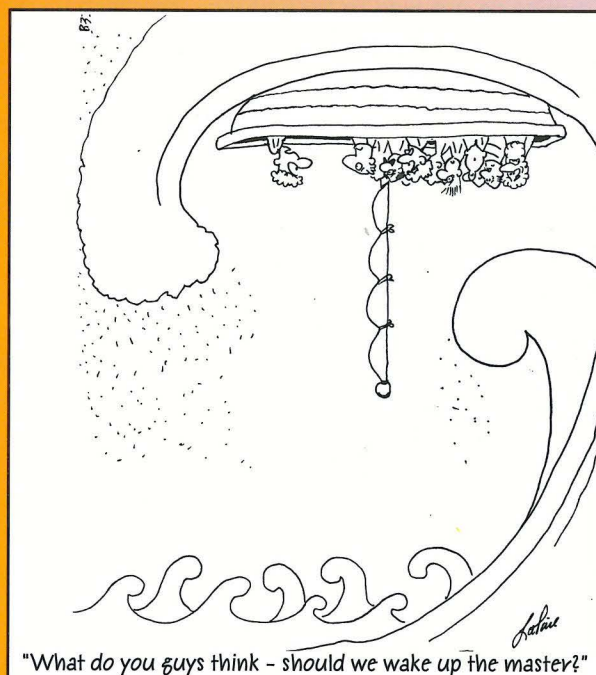
"In Bangladesh it is common before a meal to give thanks and a very common form of grace asks that in eating the meal they will receive strength (bol o shokti). I prayed that having eaten the food they might receive 'boro shasti' (great punishment!)"

John Passmore, BMS Regional Secretary for Asia and North Africa

The leech and the frog

"I anaesthetised a boy last month who'd had a nose bleed on and off for two weeks. When the ENT surgeon examined the boy he saw a leech coming out of the nose! His examining light sent it straight back up; it could only be enticed down with a wet swab. Try as he might he couldn't grab the leech and all three ended up coming to theatre. However after half an hour we had no joy in finding it. Needless to say, I'm being careful where I put my nose during this rainy season! This also seems to be the season for frogs. Us walking out of our house at night is a very hazardous experience for them; they're everywhere. Just last week in 'septic theatre' (so-called because dirty cases are done in there) the drain in the floor was blocked, so water lay about the place, and there to my amazement was a frog, sat quite happily under the operating table. I don't know what happened to him either!"

Paul Foster, an anaesthetist with BMS in Nepal



world

mission link

Streets Ahead...



Thirty five 12 to 17-year-olds from Perth Baptist Church opened their Monday Youth Fellowship doors to the rest of the church, and at the same time helped raise money for Streets Ahead.

Fired up by a mission worker who had been in Brazil some years ago, the young people originally sought to find out as much as they could about Brazil. In groups they researched the geography, social problems, and culture of Brazil. One group used the Worldwide Web.

They then saw the BMS video Streets Ahead and decided they really wanted to raise some money to help in situations such as the one they had seen on video.

Opening up their Youth Fellowship to the whole church seemed the perfect way to get everyone on board. Using the menu for rice and black bean sauce in the Streets Ahead project, they sold this simple meal at a highly inflated price. Goods in the tuck shop went for double their normal cost. There were also competitions to beat the goalkeeper, and score at table tennis against Callum, their ace player.

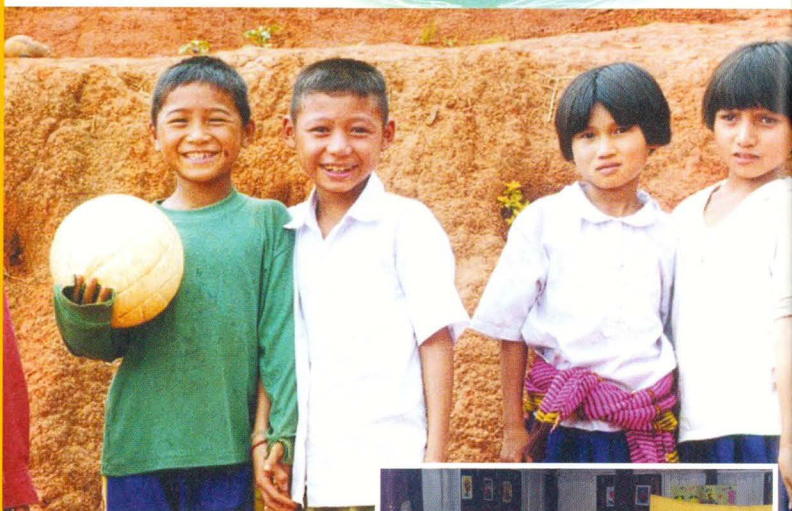
Alan Leese, the full-time youth and community worker with Perth Baptist Church said, "We're aiming to get kids to be activists, and also we're giving them an awareness of BMS work in Brazil."



Six-year-old Alexandra Roy gave up television, computer and playstation for one week, and in so doing raised £170.50 for Streets Ahead.

Alexandra, from Herne Bay Baptist Church, on her own initiative, wrote to her minister Revd Tom McKinlay, saying she would like to help the children of Brazil. She had been inspired by the Streets Ahead poster display at her church.

The church sponsored her for giving up her favourite pastimes.



Hillingdon Park Baptist Church



Children from Nyasaklo School

When BMS Co-ordinator Simon Jones visited Hillingdon Park Baptist Church one Sunday morning last year, little did he realise how one chance remark would escalate and grow into a fundraising project.

Simon, speaking about his recent visit to Thailand mentioned in passing the need for electricity at Nyasaklo School in the north of Thailand.

About 30 people independently felt they needed to give some money to help in this situation.

Their spokesperson, Ruth Martin, said "The church felt very much that God had spoken to us through Simon Jones about this school. For us it was a relatively small amount of money to raise, but we knew it would make such a difference to the life of this school."

When Simon went back to the church in the evening, they had already written out a cheque for £1,000 for him to give to BMS. The church decided to give the money upfront, and to continue raising it throughout the year.

The minister, Revd Reg Craig said, "We're quite a missionary-conscious church anyway, but this took me back in the way people responded."

Leaving your comfort zone

Now it's your opportunity to find out more, to give, to pray and to go...

INFORMATION AND PRAYER RESOURCES

☐ I would like to find out more about BMS work in:

- ☐ Angola
- ☐ Albania
- ☐ Nepal
- ☐ Hungary

☐ I would like to start receiving news/prayer letters from:

- ☐ Simon & Karen Collins
- ☐ Mary Parsons
- ☐ Paul & Angela Foster
- ☐ Stanley & Nancy Hornsby
- ☐ Reuben & Katie Martin

so that I can pray for their part in making Jesus known worldwide.

GOING

☐ I would like to find out more about:
☐ the vacancies advertised on page 31, especially

.....(please state)

- ☐ other long-term vacancies
- ☐ being a BMS Volunteer
- ☐ overseas Action Teams (Year Teams)
- ☐ UK Year Action Teams
- ☐ summer Teams

Giving to BMS

☐ I would like to give financially to BMS. Please send me:

- ☐ Ways of Giving leaflet which tells me about all the different ways I can give
- ☐ how I can join the BMS Birthday Scheme
- ☐ details of the BMS Relief Fund

☐ Anything else, not mentioned above (please specify)

Name
 Address

 Post Code

Please cut out whole page or photocopy and send to: Rob Vaines, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA

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If you want mb for yourself just fill in the details and your name and address in the coupon at the bottom of the page.

If you want to give mb as a gift please fill in the recipients name in the space provided plus payment details and your own name and address at the bottom of the page.

(Recipients)Name.....

Address.....

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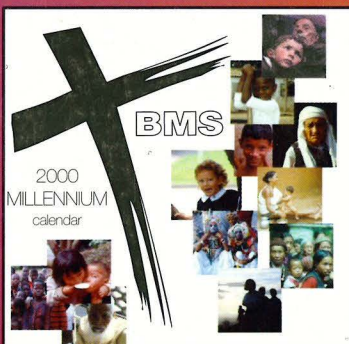
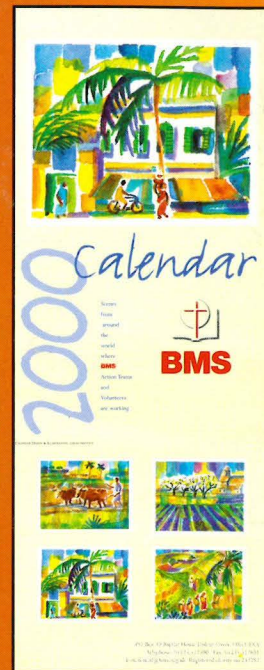
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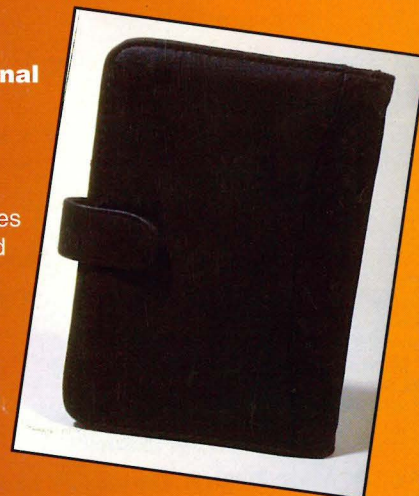
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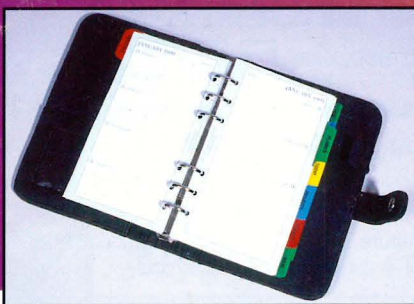
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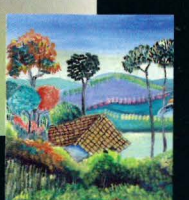
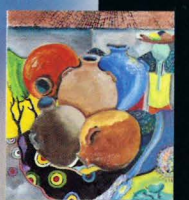
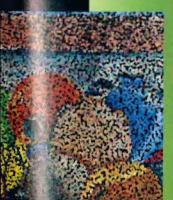
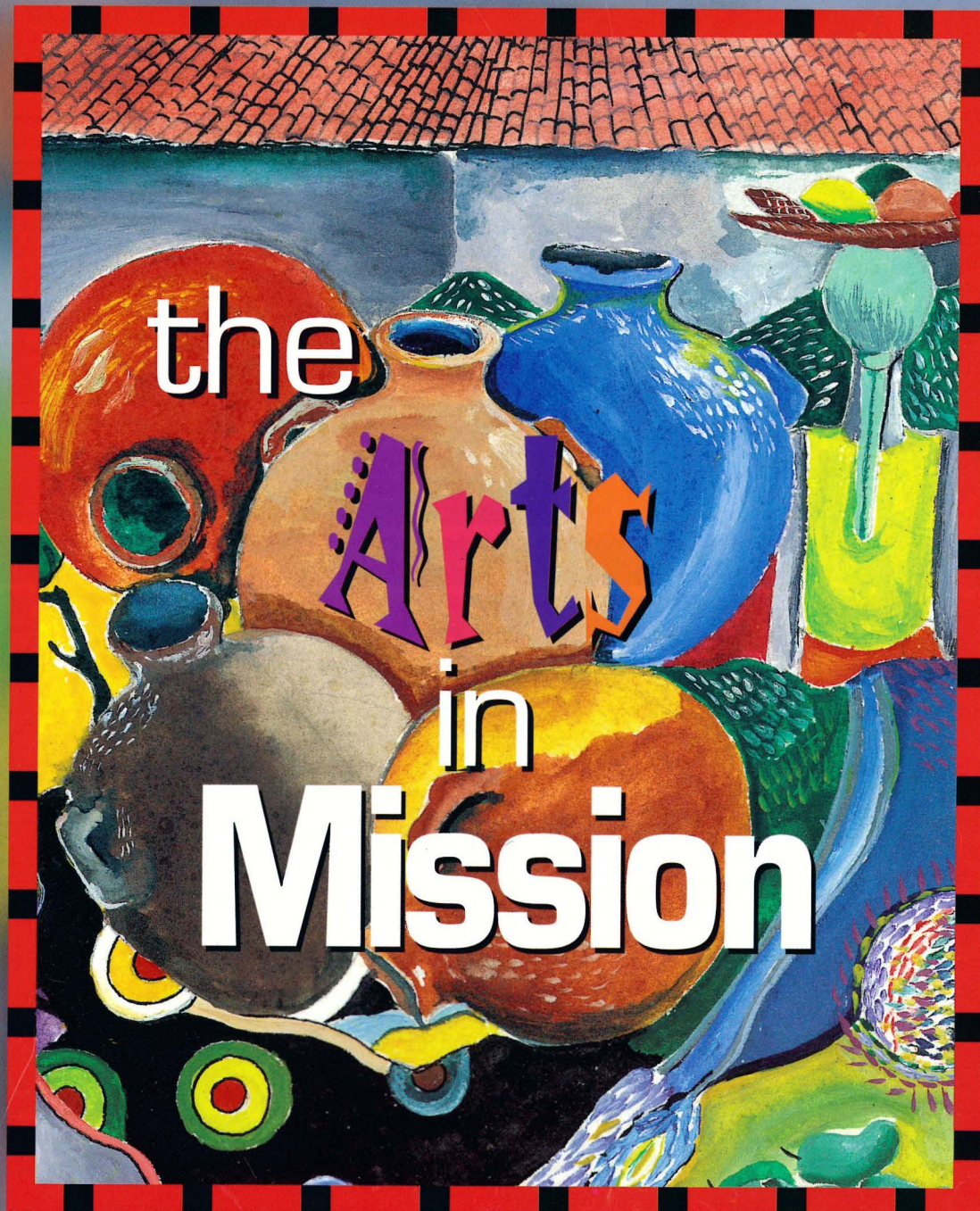
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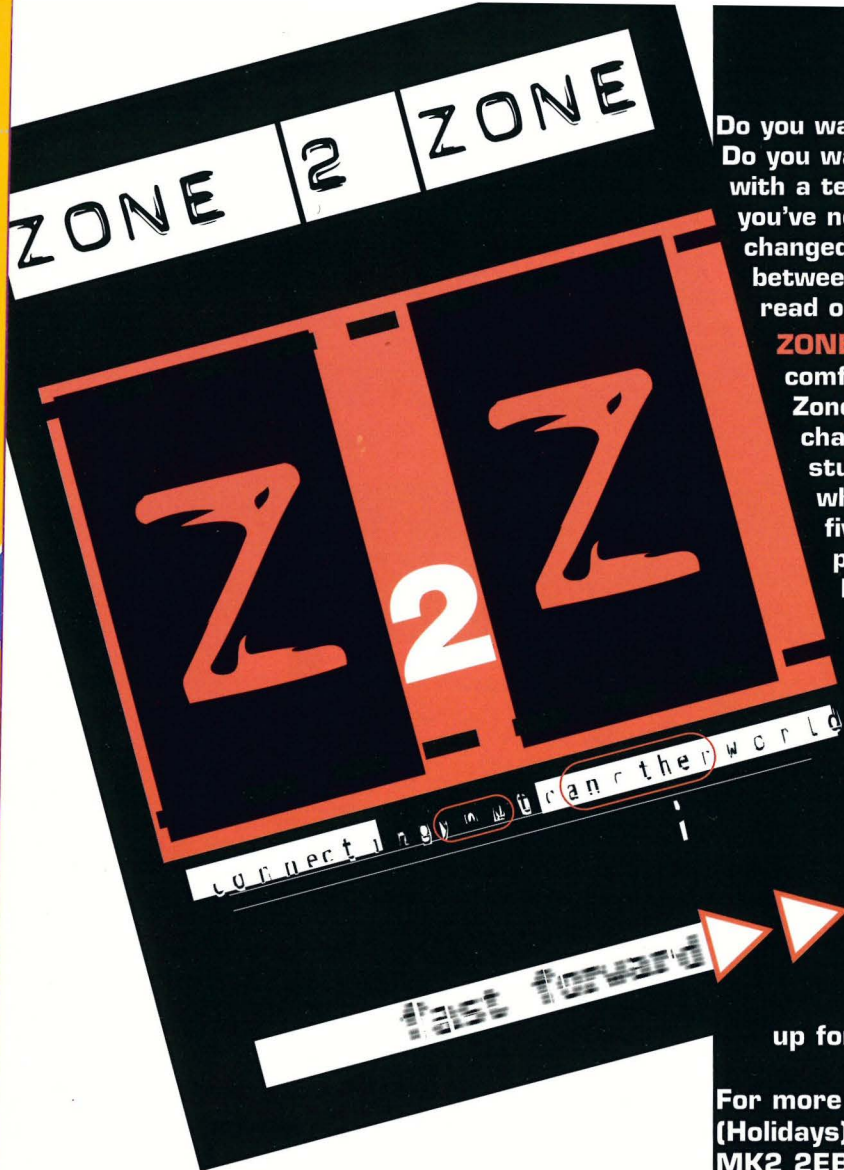
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Already a lot of interest is being shown in this joint publication between BMS, Scripture Union and World Vision.

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mh march : april 2000

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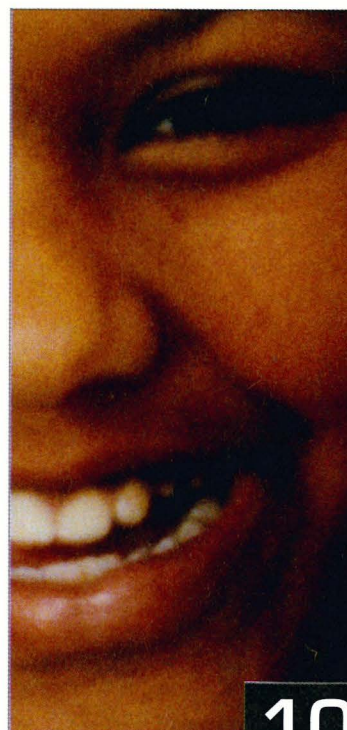
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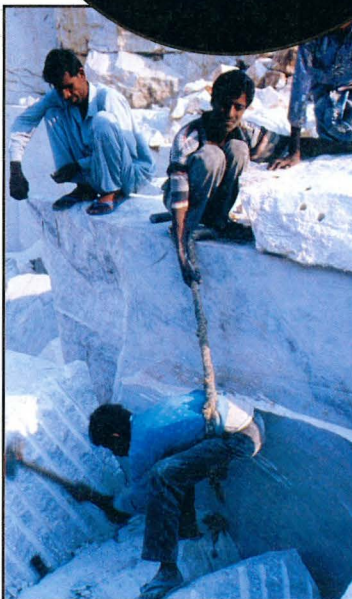
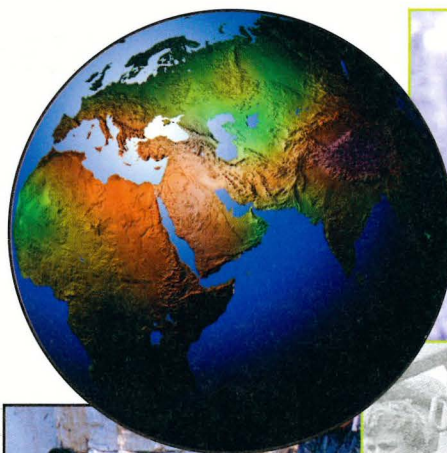
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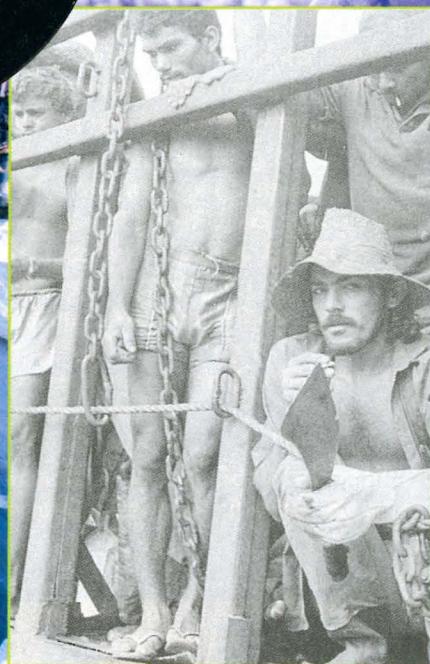
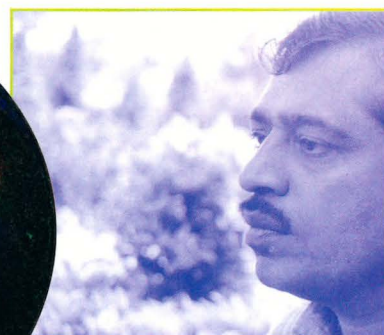
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ANTI SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL



World Call to end bonded labour

Bonded labour is illegal in India, but conservative estimates recognise at least

The initial debt can begin when people are locked into a cycle of bonded labour. When a man comes to marry he may have no money to pay for his wedding because his father was bonded to a landlord, and had no money to pass on. So the bridegroom will borrow from the landlord maybe something like 6,200 rupees (£87). With a minimum wage of 35 rupees (50p) a day it should take 177 days'

NEWS

work to pay off an interest-free loan. But the newly married couple receive no payment from the landlord for their work – just enough food to keep themselves alive. So it can be that years and years later they are still working for the same landlord. When they are sick, they still have to work, or risk being beaten repeatedly.

In 1999 Anti-Slavery International gave their Anti-Slavery Award to Vivek and Vidyullata Pandit, a couple who have worked for 20 years on bonded labour and other rural rights issues. They have released more than 1,500 bonded labourers, and have set up a rural development agency. None of the bonded labourers they have been responsible for releasing have returned to bondage, and their organisation of the rural poor is leading to sustainable change. Vivek is pleased by the recognition of their work, but says "Poor people should possess power and should rule, and to some extent they have achieved this in this region... but we believe that nobody is free until everybody is free."

BMS is officially supporting Anti-Slavery International's campaign to outlaw bonded labour.

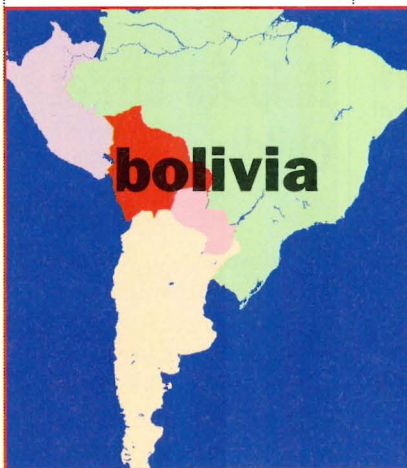
You will find a postcard in this issue of *mb*, part of Anti-Slavery's two-year campaign against bonded labour. Please send your postcard to Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, urging the UN to take effective action to eliminate bonded labour.

Bolivia Evangelicals establish presence

More than 138,000 people attended a four-day Bolivia for Christ rally organised by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association at the end of last year. Almost 20,000 made professions of faith.

The crusade director, Norm Mydske, said that the number of people making first-time professions of faith in Christ "was extremely high" compared to other events. More than 60 per cent of the people who filled out decision cards "indicated they made decisions for salvation."

The children's programme, too, was especially put together in a way that children could understand, the organisers said. More than 32,000 children attended the high-energy stage performance and on the Saturday alone 4,233 children responded to an invitation to become



Nigeria

As a third Nigerian state has started to make moves towards officially implementing strict Koranic laws, the country's leading Christian organisation has threatened to mount a legal challenge, claiming that Koranic law is unconstitutional and jeopardises the unity of the country. The Christian Association of Nigeria said it had written to the Nigerian Attorney General asking him to challenge the imposition. (ENI)

Pakistan

Christians rode a 'Peace Train' through 12 cities across Pakistan. Scores of people took part in the journey, which lasted five days, taking them from the Afghan border to Karachi on the Arabian Sea. In the larger cities the travellers met with local Christians and held marches, whilst in the smaller cities they gave gospel drama shows and handed out videos and publications. The Pakistan Bible Society provided 100,000 special folders of materials, and Campus Crusade for Christ provided thousands of 'Jesus' videos. (CDN/Religion Today)

USA

The World Bank is reported to have said that an international plan to cut poverty in half by 2015 is unlikely to meet its goal. In a report on the aftershocks of the global financial crisis, Uri Dadush, Director of the Bank's development prospects said, "The picture that emerges at the turn of the century is one of stalled progress for the poor, and of rising numbers of poor people in most developing regions. While the global economy is clearly on the mend... the fact is that many developing countries throughout the world remain in a very difficult situation." (CDN)

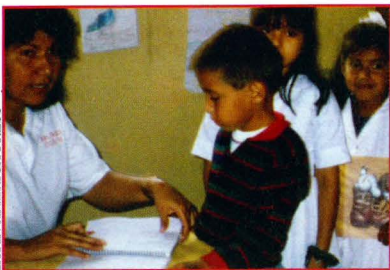
Sweden

To mark the new millennium the Swedish Parliament has commissioned a new translation of the Bible into Swedish. This is the first official translation since the 1500s. The new translation was formally presented to Parliament at the end of last year; it has been the subject of much discussion in the media, with a series of five-minute readings being broadcast on TV in the run-up to its publication. (CDN)

Southern Africa

Pastors in southern Africa are overwhelmed by the AIDS crisis there. The Society of International Ministries reported that nearly 12 million Africans have died from the disease, and there are an estimated 5,500 funerals a day in southern Africa alone. Pastors are spending all the time performing funerals, visiting the sick and counselling grieving families that they do not have time to prepare or preach sermons. The emotional toll of so many deaths is making church members despondent. (CDN)

news in brief ● news in brief ● news in brief ● news in brief



Christians.

The large number of commitments reflects a 40-year trend towards evangelical Christianity in Bolivia. In 1960 evangelicals made up less than one per cent of the population, whereas today some ten to 15 per cent of the people belong to evangelical churches. Evangelicals began an intense effort to evangelise Bolivia in the early 1960s, offering a personal faith and vibrant worship.

These findings are supported by figures from the Bolivian Bible Society, which recorded record sales of Bibles in 1998. Some 140,000 Bibles were sold, about 50,000 more than in the previous year.

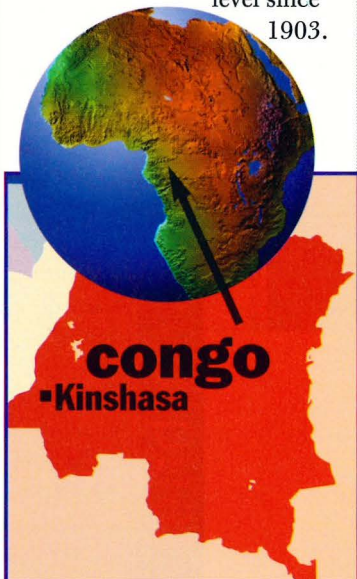
The rally was hosted by some 350 evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic churches representing 23 Protestant denominations. Organisers trained 10,000 counsellors, ushers and children's workers to minister to the crowds that filled the 45,000-seat Ramon Tahuichi Aguilera Stadium.

Bolivia is one of three Latin American countries where Catholicism remains the official religion. The Catholic Church has been critical of the new churches but is starting to accept that Pentecostal and evangelical churches are not sects, but "churches with all the wealth of Christianity" according to Bishop Moises Morales at last year's Bolivian Bishop's Conference. (CDN/Religion Today)

Congo Floods cause fears



Concern is growing in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo Republic as the River Congo is rising, and is at its highest level since 1903.



This is causing serious problems in the low-lying areas of both Kinshasa and Brazzaville though the town centres have not been directly affected.

In Kinshasa some 5,000 people have been evacuated and moved beyond the airport to a farm on higher ground.

It is anticipated that the river will continue to rise, eventually affecting over half the local districts in Kinshasa.

One immediate problem is that two of the major water processing plants have been flooded. Kinshasa gets its water from the River Congo, and then treats it before distribution around the city. Some areas of the city have therefore been without drinking water, and unconfirmed cases of cholera have been reported.

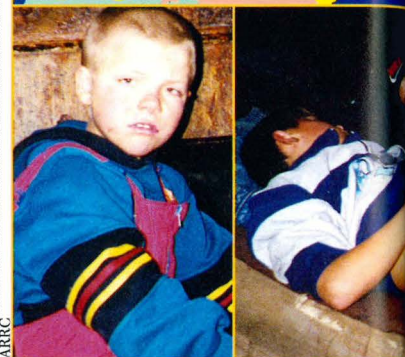
The River Congo is high because of heavy rains upriver in the Equator Region of Congo and in the Central African Republic where rainfall has been heavier than usual in the last 12 months. When the rainy season hit Kinshasa last November, the level of the river was largely unaffected, but the drainage ditches, which had been neglected for years, caused extra water to lie around.

Some had spoken out about the high level of water in recent months, but their voices were largely unheeded. People did not realise just how high the water level was, and both governments had been preoccupied with civil war, so had made no preparations to cope with the floods.

BMS currently has seven personnel in the Democratic Republic of Congo. All of them are reported to be safe.

Russia Help for street children

Aid workers in Russia plan to establish a halfway-house in Chita as emergency short-term accommodation for street children, who have been rescued from their life on



the streets, but whose situations still need assessment before a permanent home can be found for them.

Estimates vary widely concerning the total number of children living on the streets in the Russian Federation, but most people agree they number at least one million. In Chita alone, where winter temperatures can fall as low as minus 40°C, there are at least 1,000 street children, who sleep under cardboard boxes in the market square, in the basements of blocks of flats along with the household rubbish, or underground, taking it in turns to sleep on mattresses slung across pipes that carry the heating from the centrally controlled power stations across the city.

Most of these children are 'social orphans', who have run away from home because their alcoholic parents have beaten them, or have refused to let them into the home until they bring some food with them. (ARRC)

Burundi Thousands trapped in squalid camps

A mission worker has spoken out about the appalling conditions in the country's detention camps, where hundreds of thousands of people are trapped – without food, shelter or sanitation. As many as 800,000 Hutu civilians have been forced into detention camps outside Bujumbura, the capital. Burundi's Tutsi-dominated government hopes the strategy will thwart attacks by Hutu rebels entrenched around the city.

Southern Baptist agricultural evangelist David Brandon said that

many observers considered these settlements to be little more than death camps.

"Starvation is a reality," he said, "diseases are increasing and thousands of people are lying in a foetal position, waiting to die." He added "Humanitarian aid organisations are not doing anything because of the United Nations killings."

This was a reference to an attack in which two UN aid officials were killed while visiting a detention camp. Whilst the government blamed the attack on Hutu rebels, others believed the attack was co-ordinated by Tutsi-dominated soldiers to force aid agencies to leave, and put more pressure on the rebels. In fact the UN did reduce its staff drastically after the assault and other aid groups suspended their operations.

Brandon found himself in a helpless situation as people were starving to



Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

In case it isn't obvious the picture is of teabags hung out to dry on the washing line. They're put there by my missionary friend Barbara. As I explained to a church where I showed the photo, you can tell how experienced missionaries are by the number of times they re-use teabags. When missionaries are new, they can't make them last more than three. By the second term of service they can get life out of them – even after six or seven cups. But a real pro uses them ten times, though by then she just pops one in her mouth and sucks. It was a joke, one I thought worth the effort involved in pinning up all those tea bags. I waited for the laugh. It never came. The audience believed me.

And they believed me because they really thought missionaries used teabags over and over again. These good church people didn't reuse their teabags, but surely missionaries didn't mind. I told that to other missionaries. "I'm not surprised they thought that," one said, "because I've been sent used teabags from home with a note saying they hope I'll enjoy what flavour's left." By now at least six missionaries have told me similar things. And it's not just teabags. Some have been sent tights with holes, so they can mend and wear them.

I know people mean well when they do these things. But it's not how missionaries should be treated. The 'keep 'em poor, keep 'em humble' mindset that demeans Christian workers needs to change. A simple gospel lifestyle for all God's people is right, whether here or far away. No-one should be asked to live on scraps others are finished with. God's servants deserve better. And that includes a new openness about living costs and a financial commitment to match our words of encouragement and prayer. I hope we've grown up enough to give them those. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



death in camps to which he had no access. "People have been surviving by selling anything they can," he said, "And by stealing from local fields or from others in the camps. Now the rainy season has started, which will drastically increase dysentery and cholera and weaken everyone, as most have no shelter whatsoever."

He went on to observe the situation from Kenya, having had to leave Burundi because of unrelated visa complications. "We heard several stories about how people were praising God for delivering them from starvation. Some of them hadn't had any food in three days. The greatest value was in the empowerment of the local Christians to help. They were only a step above the families they helped in terms of food security." (CDN/IMB)

Uzbekistan Baptist registration refused

Local authorities in the town of Urgench in south-western Uzbekistan have given a breathing space of 'a couple of days' for the local Baptist church to correct the inadequacies in its application after first of all refusing registration to the church.

As far back as September 1999, the local church in Urgench collected together all the documents necessary for registration, the Baptist

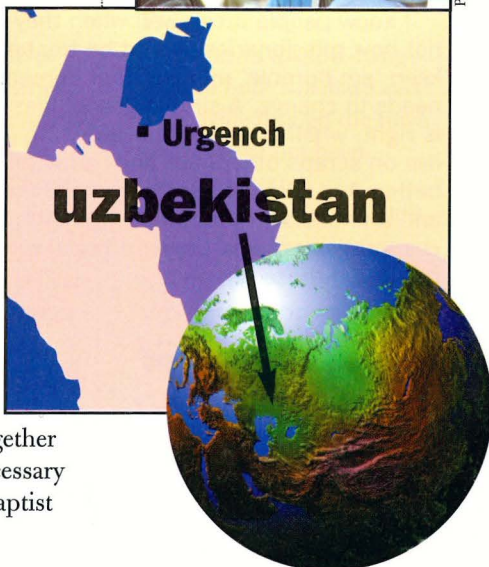
Union of Central Asia reported.

Two months later the officials at the Department of Justice in Urgench returned the documents to the leader of the community, Oleg Vader, with an accompanying letter pointing out the failure to conform with legislation, and stating that the church's documents would not be considered. One of the reasons given was that the house in which the believers met was not acceptable to the Justice Department authorities, though it is not clear why. The letter recommended that the church find an alternative place to meet – an impossible request given the three-month timescale for the church to resubmit its application.

The church believes this was just an excuse for the local authorities to reject the application. It also maintains the vast amount of money spent on submitting the application was now lost – the registration fee for an individual community is 50 times the minimum monthly wage. (Keston)



PEOPLE INTERNATIONAL



Vinoth Ramachandra

The Fellowship and the Cross

The cross of Christ has broken down all social and political barriers, so that one new humanity is born out of the old fragmented, alienated race (Eph 2:14-18; Gal 3:28 etc). Accepting Christ as Lord, therefore, involves commitment to a new community through which all our prior loyalties are re-defined.

In some parts of Asia, national citizenship is defined in terms of religious affiliation; so that those who embrace the cross of Christ lose many of their civic rights. Many Christians who have come from Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist backgrounds have experienced rejection by their families. Christians in some parts of the Two-Thirds World have been imprisoned, beaten, had their travel restricted, and even been killed because they dared to disobey unjust laws. In multi-ethnic societies, Christians who have dared to speak out about the sins of their own ethnic group have been stigmatised and intimidated by their neighbours. North American or Western European Christians who have espoused the cause of minority groups, challenged the wastefulness and greed of their societies, or who have challenged their governments' policies abroad, have often been marginalised by their own churches as well as by the mass media.

One way of avoiding such conflicts is by putting 'church growth' at the forefront of our missionary calling. Many 'church growth' advocates see the planting of 'homogeneous' churches as the secret of evangelistic advance. People, after all, would prefer to meet with others who share their interests and cultural values. It would lessen the possibility of tension and conflict. But would such practice be consistent with a gospel that challenges cultural pride and calls people into the deeper fellowship of the cross? ●

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES.



lee bray's diary



LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Continuing the extracts from his diary.

Tuesday 26

Roused at 5am. Today is a strike day in Dhaka, and we have to be across the city before 6am. By 5.55 there is still no sign of our driver. Venturing outside we find ourselves locked in behind a metal gate. The security guard is fast asleep in his hut, despite his radio, whistle, and musical clock. His dog patrols the courtyard and growls at us from the other side of the gate. Outside in the alley, we can hear our driver trying to call the guard. This would be comical if it weren't serious! After several minutes we manage to wake the guard (and probably others too!) He looks sheepish as he unlocks the gates. If this were reported he would lose his job! As we set off it is past 6.15. Our destination today (and over the next two days) is a Consultation involving BMS, LMS (a German mission) and BBS (the local Bangladesh Baptist Sangha). As it is so early we have a room with some beds to rest. We also share the room with some mosquitoes! We gather for breakfast - boiled eggs, bread, marmalade and hot, sweet tea. The Consultation will be conducted in English. I have no official capacity, so listen and learn. In the evening, after dinner, we rejoin the mosquitoes in our room. Sue reassures us there is no malaria in Dhaka, just an outbreak of denghi fever! We stay in the room until it is judged safe to drive back to the flat, shortly after 11pm. In bed that night the sounds outside begin to seem familiar, but I sleep little.



Wednesday 27

The day begins, as usual, with a cold shower, but not so early as yesterday. We travel through Dhaka at 8.30am. The Consultation ploughs on, but the local church seems to value it highly. That evening we are taken to Dhaka's smart hotel, The Sonargoan, for coffee. Dhaka by night has an air of magic. The hotel is quite different from the city - polished marble halls, fountains, walls of glass, shopping malls and restaurants, designed to give visitors the right impression, but the giveaway is the presence of soldiers outside. They are there to keep the beggars out.



Thursday 28

All of us have coffee and desserts for less than £3. Wake at 7am. Six hours sleep last night - wonderful! Consultation in the morning, and in the afternoon we visit the Blind School for Girls, whose first director was Veronica Campbell from Plymouth, where I grew up. I had no idea that I would be seeing the work established by the first missionary I ever knew. The school's most serious problem is its site. When built it was on raised ground in a largely undeveloped area. Since then Dhaka has grown. The result is that the site, which was at first on ground higher than its surroundings, is now on low ground and liable to flooding. It is considering whether to abandon the ground floor and build an extra one on top. There is no easy solution. Back at the Consultation we all participate in a closing act of worship. We each light a candle and these are placed in a circle around a larger 'Master candle', symbolising our unity in Christ. The act is moving in its simplicity. We have made some good friends, Bangladeshi and German.

To be continued next issue.

tell me about this picture," I said to a five year old who had just spent three very intense minutes drawing a huge picture in blue crayon, and was now standing proudly in front of me.

"This is about Brazil," she replied.

Even though I couldn't quite decipher the illustration, there was a good chance it was about Brazil as I had spent the morning speaking to 40 children about street kids and favelas. Thinking I was onto a winning streak, I then pointed to a darker blue creation on the page. "That's where the really poor people live. They don't have houses like here and they live next to a rubbish dump."

"Excellent," I thought. This girl had really grasped this favela business. I moved my finger to the two stripy blue lines next to the favela. Committing the error that every teacher will gasp at, I then asked confidently, "And is this a ladder to get into the house?"

"That," she said, horrified, "Is a shark."

Children are the most creative people I know. Whether playing with toys or kicking a stone around the school yard, a child becomes totally absorbed in what they are doing. Our children have much to stimulate their interest in the abundance of toys the West produces. Yet children have this built in capacity to be creative with whatever they play with. Watch a girl in South Central Asia lovingly wrap some material around a piece of wood and you know that isn't a doll, it's a baby. See the competitive side to all eight-year-olds come to life when you watch boys in Africa play football with a ball made out of bags and with no boots on their feet, or watch street kids in Brazil play in and around an old car tyre and you know that imagination takes over - a child is hard at work being creative.

Over the past two years I have had the privilege of working with over 500 children aged between six and 12 who come along to the BMS WOW Action Days, and who have invited me into their Sunday classes to talk about

mission. The challenge to make anything relevant to a child forces the teacher or leader to be creative. Children learn by hands on 'doing', singing, competitions, craft, stories and comparison lifestyles. Mission is made real to them if they meet someone from another country and culture. Recently I took the BMS 28:19 UK Action Team with me to a WOW Action Day. The three Brazilians and one UK member each joined a small group of children and answered any questions the children had about Brazil. As I moved around the groups, I was amazed and encouraged to hear the children asking the team about food, insects, the government, traffic, weather, school, football and churches. Not only were the children listening intently to the replies, the group leaders were too!

The seven to 11 age range love competing against each other, so it's not uncommon in an Action Day to see teams of children attempting to transfer one square of raw jelly from one plate to another using a pair of chopsticks. Not only does this show children that a knife and fork aren't the only way to eat, it also illustrates good team work and encouraging each other, which is really what mission is all about.

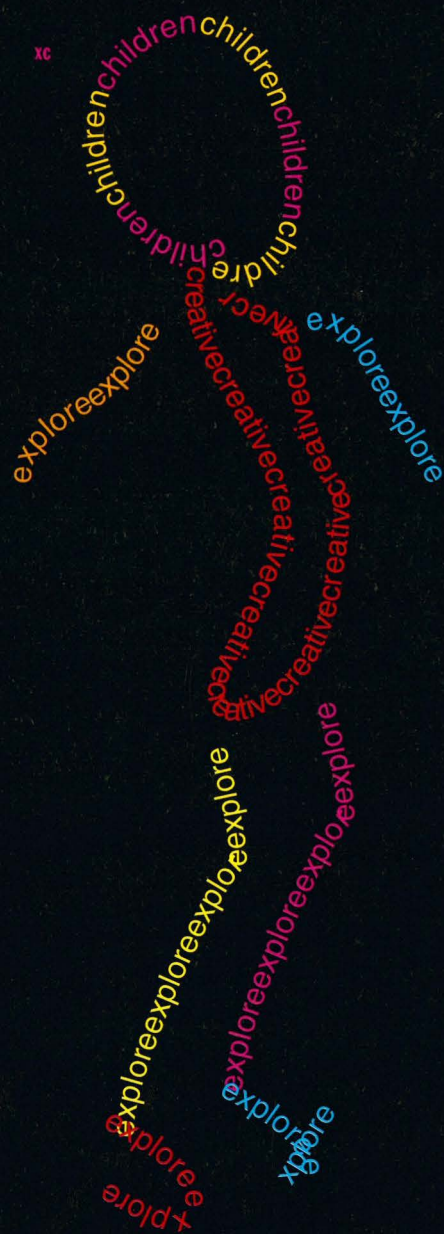
Simple action games called Traffic Lights or 'Simon Says' are excellent ways to talk about the command that Jesus gives to us in Matthew 28:19. If we are Christians, we have to listen to what Jesus asks us to do, and then we have to do it. For some people that means going to other parts of the world to tell others about Jesus. For others it means talking to friends and family in this country about him.

It is possible to be very creative in prayer with children. By writing prayers on the back of cardboard fish and laying the fish on a blue cloth, whilst some good readers in the group read out some prayers, we've been able to spend five minutes looking at the fish and praying for people in Bangladesh. Children then take the fish home to remind them to pray.

Sometimes we wonder just how much information children absorb. By

asking them to draw something about a specific country we have spoken about on an Action Day or in a Sunday service, we are encouraging them to really think about what they have heard. I have seen some great pictures of favelas (and sharks!), floods in Bangladesh, food in Thailand, street kids in India with moving prayers for these people who suddenly have become real to the children. Being creative is not difficult, but finding the time to be creative is something else! ●

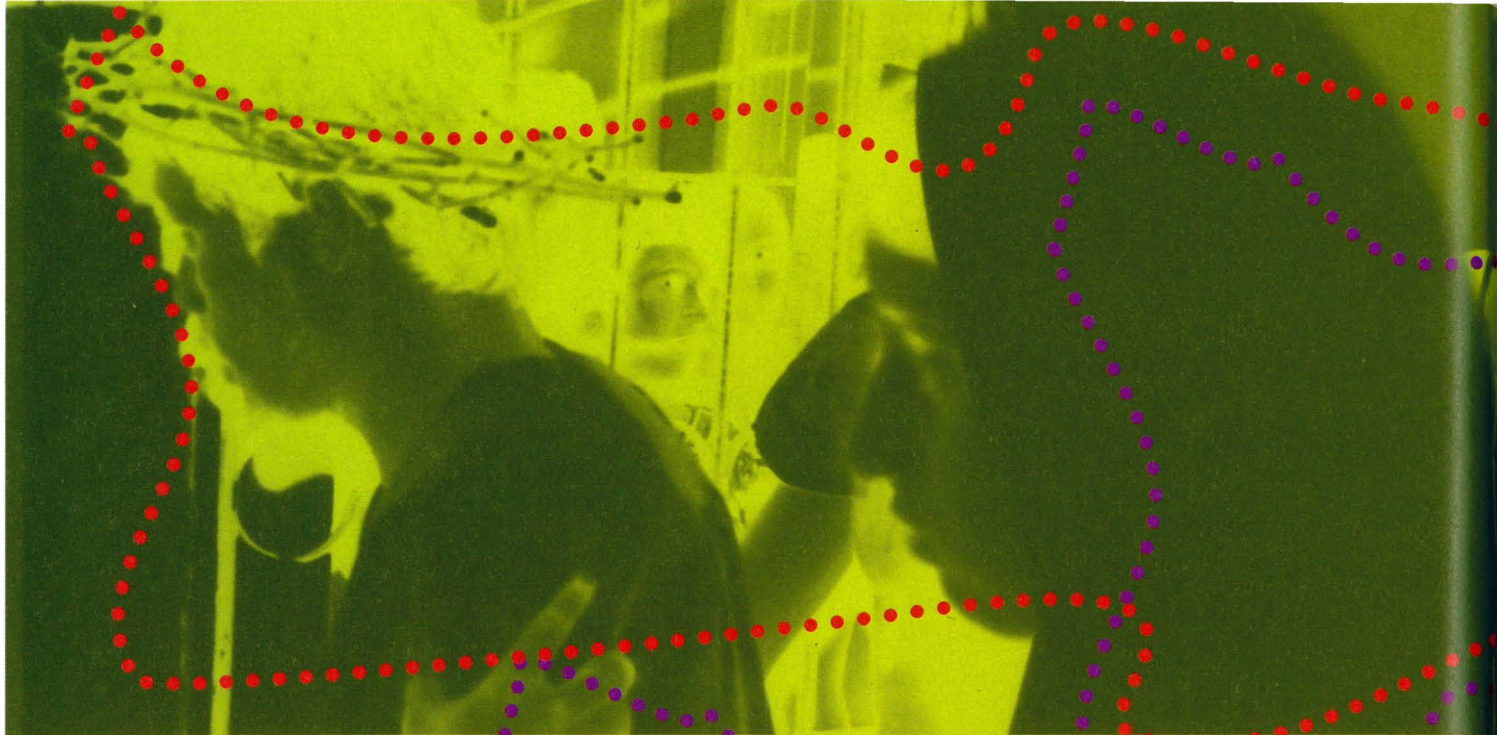
Fiona Pimlott is BMS Youth and Children's Co-ordinator



Working with children



"it's not uncommon in an Action Day to see teams of children attempting to transfer one square of raw jelly from one plate to another using a pair of chopsticks"



Drama in the streets Drama in the streets

John Clark recounts how the Easter story is taken to the people of Brazil

Good Friday. Fortaleza in the North-East of Brazil. Three degrees south of the equator. The daytime temperature approaches 36°C and the night-time isn't much below that.

It's four o'clock in the afternoon, and I'm on my way to Conjunto Esperança, a low to middle class area of Fortaleza, for the start of its home-grown version of the Oberammergau play, a joint effort by the local Baptist and Pentecostal church. It has been repeated every Easter for the past five years.

It's unusual to be a spectator for a play like this because passion plays have usually been the hallmark of the Roman Catholic Church. A replica of Jerusalem has been built in the interior of the North-East just for putting on such plays. It attracts thousands to its re-enactment of the Easter story.

As I arrive and park the car near the Pentecostal church, the streets are already crowding with people. They're out in the streets, leaning against the cars. Others, arriving early, have got themselves prime viewing positions, looking from the outside, through the window openings in the concrete walls to what will take place inside the church.

It's 4.45pm, and really, something should have started happening by now, but the 'mañana' attitude pervades this part of Brazil. I find out that we're still waiting because the sound technician hasn't turned up yet.

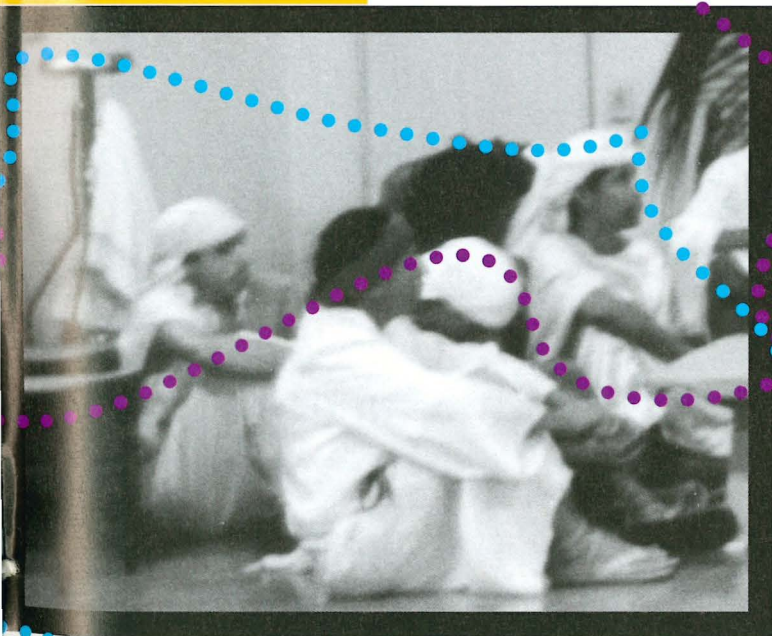
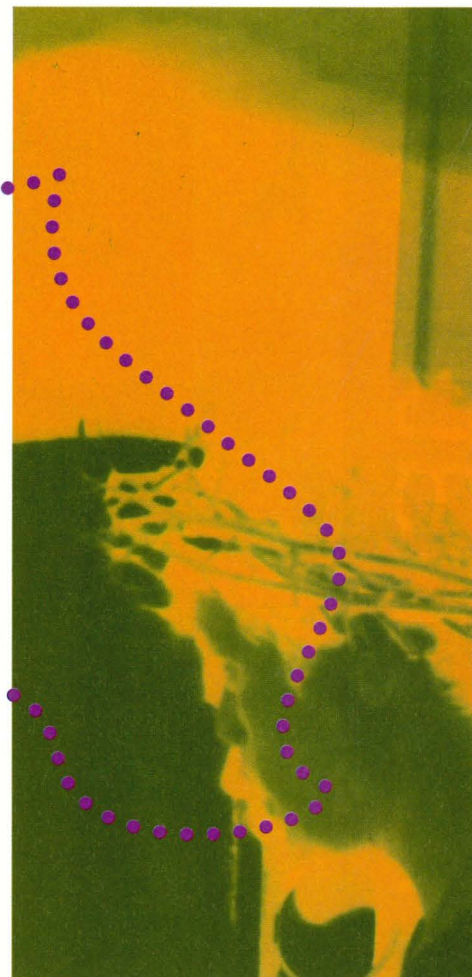
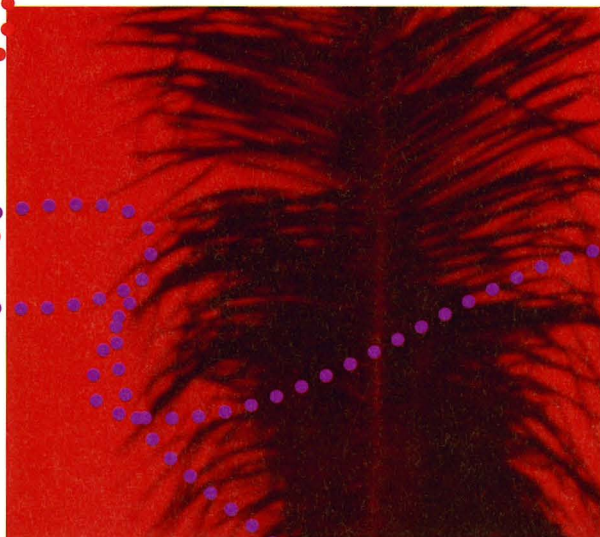
A car comes down the road, and skids to a halt outside. It's Fabio, the sound technician. Others rally round to help him get

"we follow them, through the streets, a motley bunch of people, as it must have been that day in Jerusalem all those years ago"



ama the...

rtaleza



his kit out of the car. A quarter of an hour later, the play starts. Church members, looking very much like first century Jews, enact the trials and Last Supper of Jesus.

Jesus is played by Paulo and the rest of the disciples by men from the two churches. There's an air of authenticity about this local effort, as the men sit on the floor, at a low table, surrounded by palm trees and heat.

Suddenly the action is over at the Pentecostal church. 'Jesus' is taken through the streets to the Baptist church to be crucified! He is led by 'Roman soldiers' who constantly whip him. ('Jesus' is protected by a cardboard sheet strategically

placed under his robe.) He is followed by a jeering crowd and mourning disciples. Jesus is wearing a crown of thorns and carrying his cross. It was daylight when the play started; darkness has fallen now.

We follow them, through the streets, a motley bunch of people, as it must have been that day in Jerusalem all those years ago. Talking between ourselves, having people stare at us, or ignore us. A car with a loud speaker on top follows the procession. It has Ana Paula inside singing an Easter Song – A Via Dolorosa – the Painful Way. It's a walk that takes 15 minutes or so, and then we stop. We have arrived at Hope Baptist Church.

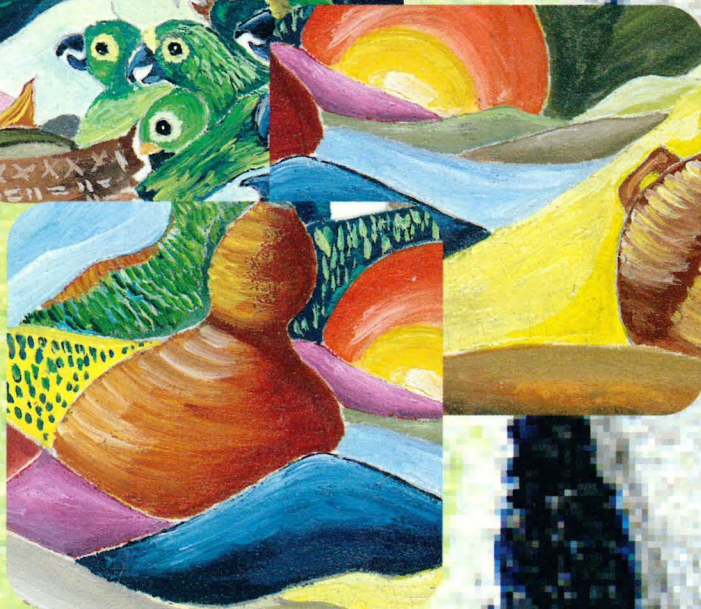
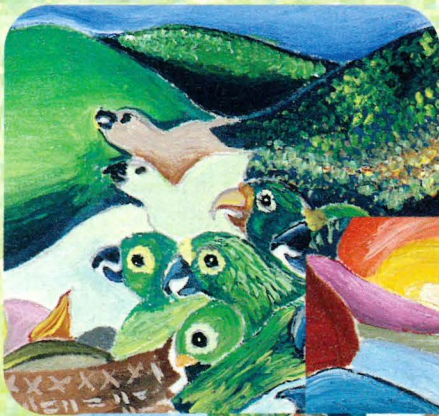
Jesus is crucified here in between the two thieves. Again, the realism and authenticity strike me. The piercing screams are real as the nails are hammered into the crosses. There is dejection, desolation and agony from the disciples as the crosses are laboriously lifted into place by the soldiers. Many of the congregation are in tears.

The baptistry set in the end wall of the church doubles up as the tomb where Jesus was laid. Then with a mighty thunder clap and lightning flashes, that frighten some of the children in the audience, the soldiers fall to the ground. "Are they dead?" asks one of the children. Then, in a blaze of rear-lit light Jesus rises again. By now it's black outside, and people are falling over each other at the door and windows, for a view of what is taking place inside the church.

In one sense, it's only a bit of local theatricals, but this story with the most dramatic of endings has really impacted upon the people of Fortaleza in a way that words alone could not have done. ●

John Clark is a BMS missionary and lecturer at the Theological Seminary at Fortaleza, Brazil.

doing what comes naturally



“in one of the suburbs of the city... they have persuaded former gang members to use their artistic talent to create picturesque wall murals instead of spraying indiscriminate graffiti”

Mike Quantick explains how the Salvadoreans use their inborn talents in mission

Salvadoreans have a wealth of artistic ability which they use to earn what little they can by making things such as clay pots and kitchen utensils to sell in the local market, or using paints to decorate anything from tiny beans to huge wall murals.

Christian groups in El Salvador have sought to harness this ability as they seek to reach out into the local communities. Fraterpaz, an ecumenical group working with disadvantaged groups fighting for peace and justice in El Salvador, is supporting a project working with gangs in the capital, San Salvador. In one of the suburbs of the city, which was until recently the central meeting place, they have persuaded former gang members to use their artistic talent to create picturesque wall murals instead of spraying indiscriminate graffiti throughout the community.

Wall murals can be seen almost anywhere where there is an expanse of wall in El Salvador, both inside and out. Centro Hogar is a project for pre school children – a huge wall mural graphically depicting life during the civil war once covered one wall. However as a new generation emerges, who have not experienced the atrocities of those before them, parts of that mural have been replaced by other images. Many churches and Christian institutions use large wall murals to decorate their buildings both inside and out. Each mural tells its own story – many of the history and heritage of the country; others portraying different aspects of the Christian story and message.

Simple bright bold colours typify Salvadorean art. Churches in El Salvador and around the world have wooden crosses of varying sizes decorated with brightly coloured pictures depicting both the Christian message and aspects of life within El Salvador. Each cross has its own story to tell, like the one that can be seen in the chapel at the UCA, the Jesuit university, where in 1989 six Jesuit priests and two women were brutally murdered. The cross carries the images of those who lost their lives.

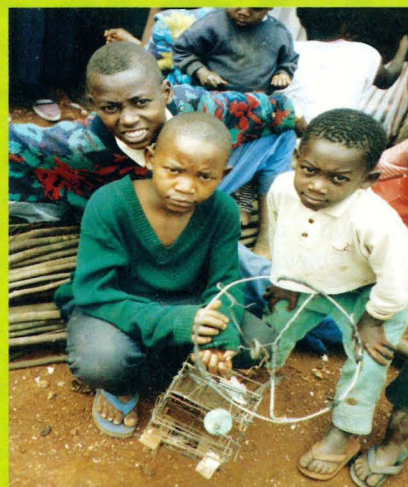
A young local artist Misael Castro is one of the inspirations behind the murals at El Cordero de Dios Baptist Church, in the suburb of Zacamil, San Salvador. One of his paintings – also reproduced on the wall outside the church – has been printed onto T-shirts, which have been sold not only in El Salvador but also in Florida and the UK to raise money to fund the outreach work the church is doing in the San Roque community situated on the lava slopes of the San Salvador volcano. Members visit the community, usually on Sunday afternoons, hold open air services and Bible studies and maintain a regular contact and support for a number of families living in little more than shacks on the hillside.

These Salvadoreans do not have much of this world's goods, but they are able to use their God-given gifts and abilities in one way or another, in the extension of his kingdom on earth. ●

Mike Quantick is BMS Administration Manager, and visited El Salvador in 1996 ●

Top Left Mural on the wall at San Salvador University
Others Original paintings by Misael Castro

Knitting baby boots"



Take some bundles of rags, string, elastic bands and tape. Who needs a leather football when you can make your own! In Kathmandu I saw homeless children amusing themselves for hours with coat

hanger wire stretched and then hooked at one end around a rubber hoop, probably from a discarded washing machine. They would run around the market square in between the rich Western tourists who were holding on to their sophisticated camcorders and telephoto lenses.

There is undoubtedly an in-built creative ability in all of us, and given the right environment our creativity can start to flow. This is not surprising because we are made in the image of a God who wants to give expression to his creativity through his creation. However, until recent years there has been a tremendous suspicion of the arts from within mainstream church life, and in many ways we have lost the innovative creative spark which propelled expressions of Christian creativity above and beyond the competition. The church were the trend-setters; now we've become largely spectators relying on the select few who represent us on the stages of science, technology and the arts.

Everywhere Jesus went he demonstrated the creativity of God. He said, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full", and he expressed this abundance on many occasions. He transformed the contents of six 30-gallon stone water jars into the best wine for the wedding reception. After an unproductive night of fishing, Jesus told his disciples to put the net on the other side of the boat, and suddenly the nets were breaking because of the volume of fish. There were 12 basket-loads of food left after the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 people on a hillside. The abundant life that Jesus came to bring flows out of the overflowing creativity of a God who makes every snowflake a different design, every fingerprint unique.

My mum used to spend every spare moment knitting garments for children in some of the poorest places on earth. "I'm only knitting baby boots", she used to say. But these became hundreds of little blessings that touched the lives of countless people she would never meet, with the love of God. Real evangelism is a natural overflow of all that God means to us and the way we exhibit this reveals something of the nature, character and purposes of God for his world. That's why recovering artistic expression, whether it be through music, drama, dance, craftwork, flower arranging, banner making, writing, sculpture, painting and knitting baby boots, should be a priority for the church in the 21st Century. ●

Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions



steve
FLASHMAN



Paradise

m i s l a i d

Howard and Jonny got creative, by Jonny

for Howard Bradley and Jonny Anstead, 1999 was an unusual year. At the beginning of the year, they had been out of BMS Action Teams for six months.

(H: I'm bored. J: Me too. H: D'ya wanna start a theatre duo? J: OK then.)

Within a few months we had given ourselves the name of Paradise Mislaid and had written a show for and about Easter, called Sharp as Nails. The idea was to communicate the gospel in a relevant and accessible way. In practice, this translated as developing a very 'special' brand of

"H: D'ya wanna start a theatre duo? J: OK then"

comedy, which was to provide the basis for a gospel presentation, while aiming to give the audience the time of their lives. Weeks, at least.

The show was well received by its audiences. They chuckled in just about all the right places, but moreover, they listened to the gospel message. After the Easter tour, a new show was written, called Love 'n' Chips, for the summer break. Now a trio, a result of the addition of the third member Minni (a mannequin from Fenwicks of Tunbridge Wells), we toured more widely around the country. We performed in churches small and large, at holiday camps and so on. We also found ourselves entertaining at the Baptist festival, Leading Edge. People laughed. People cried. Alistair Brown, the General Director of BMS branded Paradise Mislaid as 'outrageous nonsense'. And hopefully, people thought about what they were watching.


It is anyone's guess what might happen in the world of Paradise Mislaid in the future. As ever, university commitments mean that there is never enough time to do all the things that we would like to do. Jonny's Russian course, for instance, meant that the planned Christmas Extravaganza was impossible. Maybe it'll find its way into the summer programme... We hope to be able to continue to tour in our holidays, maybe revisiting old venues. We would love to be able to perform at some of the bigger festivals too. ●

Jonny Anstead went to France and Howard Bradley to Brazil with BMS Action Teams 1997/98.

For more up to date information on tours, and for your own amusement, use the Paradise Mislaid website. The address is...

www.daspikey1.co.uk/paradisemislaidd/index

Please remember them in your prayers as they plan shows etc, and also the people who hear the gospel through them!





SPECIAL REPORT

Alistair Brown visited Orissa where cyclone damage brought death to thousands of people. Here is his eyewitness report.

Reaping the whirlwind

fireflies flicker through the rapidly darkening sky. Villagers crowd around the lorry as the tailgate drops and they see the sacks. For ten minutes there's chaos, and then an old lady is brought forward. I ease a sack of beans and lentils on to her thin shoulders. She doesn't look up at me, but she nods gratefully. She slips away into the black of night to a hut with broken walls, a tarpaulin tied over sticks to shield the night chill.

That food and tarpaulin are survival for her and the other elderly people in that village. Their homes are flattened, their rice crops ruined by salt water from the coast. They are penniless people who will not live without the emergency help which BMS and others bring to them in rural Orissa.

Two cyclones devastated this poorest of the poor Indian state in October. On 17 October Ganjam and Gajapati districts were hit by what was officially termed a 'severe cyclone'. Twelve days later the whole state, but especially regions near the coast, were battered by a 'super cyclone'. Winds were often in excess of an unimaginable 200 mph. Waves 15 to 20 feet high swept ashore at vast speed, not stopping at places until 80 miles inland. Bodies were still being found weeks later. Torrential rain fell continuously for days causing serious flooding.

No-one can remember a cyclone like this. Trees snapped and houses were blown away. Animals suffocated in their thousands unable to breathe because of the ferocity of the gale. Few birds survived. Trees which still stood were stripped of their leaves. Villagers were stranded on small rises or clinging to any solid buildings. Surviving the cyclone meant real danger of death by starvation.


Relief workers reported great difficulty getting aid to remote villages in the first days after the storm. That was due partly to the vast numbers of trees blocking roads, but also because starving villagers raided relief lorries.

BMS Relief Fund help was sent instantly to India, and Madhu Singh, BMS Manager for India, travelled quickly to Orissa to assess the situation. Working with local Christians, food, emergency roofing and blankets were quickly made available, and a longer term programme of help devised.

I visited some three weeks after the cyclone. In places there was a return to near normality. In many other places life will never be the same.

In one village I'm shown a building that saved many lives. It's a dull-looking concrete club room, only some 25' long by 15' wide. When the floods came it was the only solid structure in the village. People rushed there and, incredibly 500 crammed inside. For a day and a half they stood pressed together, shivering, frightened, hungry, with flood water up to their waists. A baby of three months was crushed to death. Everyone else lived.

I watch a man mixing mud to rebuild the walls of his hut. He works the mud and water until the consistency is right, then flings it against the lattice wooden frame he has made to anchor the mud wall. I ask if I can try. About 30 crowd around to watch and laugh. Like a child building sandcastles I kneel on the ground, grab wet mud and smear it across the wall. Not very good. I try again, pricking my thumb on the sharp sticks and wondering for a split second what disease I might get from the mud. He rebukes my technique, and tells me to throw the mud against the framework. Okay, I fling it hard. Some holds, but a lot of the mud splatters back on me. The crowd roars with laughter, and so do I. We need to laugh in the midst of disaster.

A photograph showing two men in a flooded area. They are standing in water up to their waists, surrounded by a large pile of dry sticks and branches. In the background, there is a thatched roof structure. The men are wearing headbands and patterned shorts. The text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

“for a day and a half
they stood
pressed together,
shivering,
frightened,
hungry,
with flood water
up to their
waists”

An emergency feeding programme has begun for some villages. They're too poor to buy food. In the short-term they have to be helped or they would have nothing. Local volunteers work with villagers in cooking rice, lentils and vegetables for hundreds in giant cauldrons.

I meet Kumari Moharana. She's a 30-year-old disabled woman, quite diminutive and not able to walk well. She's single and her parents who used to look after her died some years ago. She lives in a 10' by 6' house at the end of a row of small dwellings. Except Kumari's house isn't there any more. Villagers have crafted twigs over which polythene has been hung to give Kumari a little shelter. Our BMS help has gone with local Christians to that village, and Kumari's home and others are getting new tin roofs. Hers must wait until local help rebuilds her walls, but that will happen soon.

There are so many affected villages in remote areas it is inevitable that government help can't get there quickly. Our aid has reached some of those. We visit a woman heavily pregnant with her fourth child. She will feed her husband and three children first, and then eat whatever's left. If there's anything. She's seriously malnourished. We insist to the village head man that those with no homes get help first. He smiles; he agrees. We wonder what'll happen when we're not there. I kneel in the dust with children, drawing matchstick figures with a stick. Crazy man, they think. But their big bright eyes light up, and they give me gorgeous smiles.

Berhampur hospital gets our help, and also goes from it with a team going out to nearby villages. The women's and children's hospital was founded by BMS in 1907, and is now the property of the Church of North India. With missionary Betty Marsh there until last year it's well known. The hospital was right in the path of the circular winds of the first cyclone. For four hours the winds blasted from one direction. Trees crashed all over the compound, some into buildings where people huddled. With winds well beyond survival speed no-one could leave. Flood water poured into buildings and gradually rose to waist level. Student nurses crouched in the dark as electricity failed. In an instant the roof was ripped off their hostel. Around midnight the storm stopped almost immediately. For an hour and a half, there was complete stillness. Then again the cyclone, but blasting in the opposite direction. Through it all midwives attended women in the labour ward, and two babies were born. When the storm finally eased people saw the perimeter wall destroyed, signs flattened, vegetation ripped from the ground, trees fallen, roofs shredded, library scattered to the winds. But they lived. I told the bright smiling student nurses that people had heard of their ordeal and were praying for them.

Recovery will be a long process for Orissa. Winds wiped out almost all the coconut and betelnut trees and betel vines. In places 90 per cent of paddy crops were destroyed. The government is providing new coconut saplings to farmers but it will be three years before they'll bear fruit. Time must pass before fishermen at the coast can sell their catches – stories have circulated that fish ate human bodies floating in the water. No-one wants these fish now.

Homes can be rebuilt. Eventually new crops will grow. Other industries will recover. But breadwinners washed out to sea won't come back, and hundreds of thousands have lost hope. The suicide rate among survivors is high.

They need compassion, to know people care, to be shown there is something to live for. Both in body and spirit the local Christians with help from BMS supporters are doing that. It may make all the difference for the future. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



Curitiba



A series edited by **Jan Kendall** that looks at towns and cities around the world where BMS personnel are working.
By **Derek Punchard**

Introduction

Curitiba is the capital of the state of Paraná in the south of Brazil. Its location and altitude of nearly 3,000 ft gives it pleasant summers and cool winters. It has been said that Curitiba is barely a Brazilian city – a view that has some basis with large numbers of immigrants from Poland, Italy, Germany, the Ukraine, Japan, Syria and Lebanon joining the earlier population of the descendents of Portuguese, negros and indians. The European immigrants began arriving in the second half of the 19th century.

History

The name Curitiba means 'many pine nuts'. In 1649, gold prospectors arrived at the River Ivo (in today's city centre), led by General Ebano Pereira. After the

gold was exhausted, the town grew as a staging post for cattle drives from Rio Grande do Sul to São Paulo and Minas Gerais. In 1693 it was raised to the status of a town, became a city in 1842, and the capital of Paraná in 1851. In this century the city has grown from a population of 40,000 to over two million today.

First Impressions

- Modern with lots of new, high-rise buildings
- Three-section buses running on special roads with tube-type bus stops
- Lots of public squares & parks
- Well-preserved, historic areas from colonial times, and typical European-style houses
- A changeable climate, with sharp changes – even on the same day

Above: Houses and apartments overlooking lake, Barigui Park

Below: Paraná Pine – symbol of Paraná, alongside new apartments





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Economy

The town's economy grew with timber and erva mate (green tea) production. From an economy based on coffee, in recent years the economy has diversified with all forms of commerce, industry and services including car, lorry and bus manufacturing by Volvo, Volkswagen/Audi, Chrysler and Renault. It boasts the oldest Federal University in Brazil, and the largest and best equipped theatre in the country. On average the citizens of Curitiba enjoy Brazil's highest standard of living, with health, education and public transport facilities that are the envy of other parts of the country. There are favelas, but they are well-hidden, and because of the cool, damp winters are sturdier than those in the cities to the north.

There are 12 museums in the city, 14 parks, a zoo, botanical gardens, a central park with a mini-zoo, and a planetarium. It is known as the ecological capital of Brazil, because of its extensive green areas. The "24 hour street" has shops and cafés open 24 hours a day, as are several supermarkets.

Transport

Much of the city centre is closed to traffic. Planners and engineers from all over Brazil, and, indeed, other cities of the world, descend on Curitiba to discover more about its modern and efficient public transport system. Pedestrians and buses are given priority, and the



bus stops look like they've come from outer space!

The city covers an area of 431 square kms, there are 246 branches of banks, 522 schools, 40 hospitals, 93 hotels, 8,000 factories, and eight newspapers.

Leisure activities

Outings to the many parks and the zoo are popular. There are 117 km of cycle tracks and several for jogging. Many parks and clubs have facilities for barbecues, where families can take their picnic and barbecue the meat over

charcoal fires.

There are regular exhibitions such as car shows, furnishings and home appliances, houses and apartments, pet shows, regional handicrafts and cottage industries etc. Eating out is very popular in the many large and small restaurants catering for every taste and nationality, including the churrasco or barbecue, sea foods, Italian and Chinese, and the usual MacDonalds and Pizza Hut.

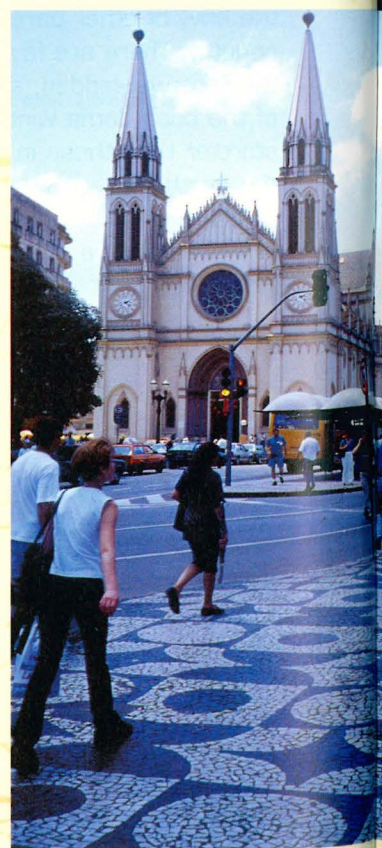
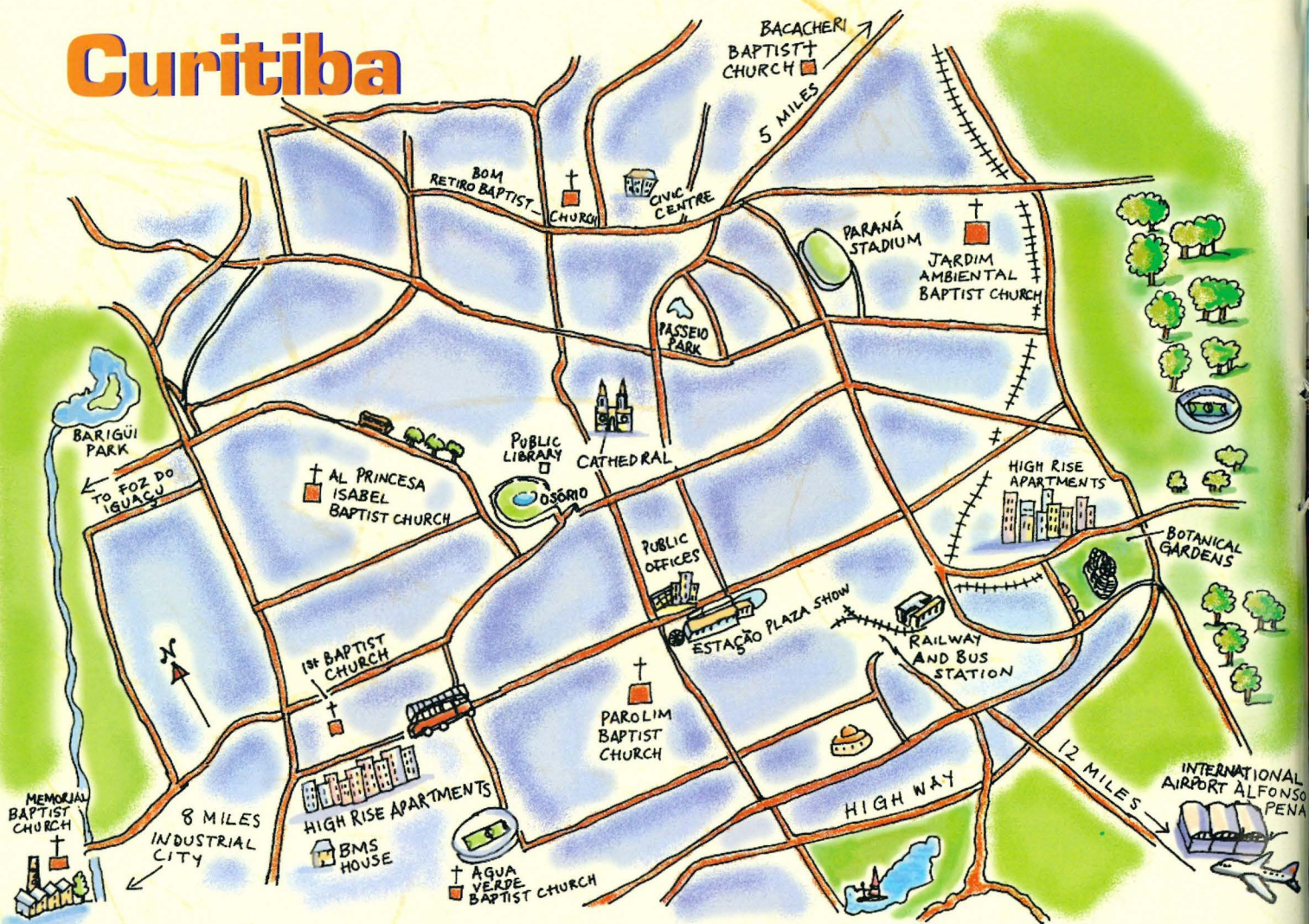


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Curitiba



The Christian scene

In a traditionally Roman Catholic country, there is a cathedral in a central square, and large churches throughout the city, ranging from traditional churches promoting Mary worship, to more recent charismatic churches. Of the traditional historic

evangelical churches, the strongest are the Baptists, with over 100 churches and congregations, although there are a few Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Lutheran and Anglican churches. Large numbers frequent the Pentecostal churches such as the Assemblies



The BMS in Curitiba

Curitiba has an important place in BMS history in Brazil, as the capital of the state where BMS worked exclusively in Brazil from 1953 to 1973. It has been home over the years to the Field Secretaries and other leaders, and where the BMS office is located, again, today. Some have worked with the Paraná Baptist Convention, others with the Seminary, with local churches and BMS administration. Yet others spent their period of language study there. ●

Far left: 1st Baptist Church

Roman Catholic Cathedral in Tiradentes Square

Left: Colonial buildings of old Curitiba

Below: Italia building in town centre - cleaning windows!



of God, Four Square Gospel, and the neo-Pentecostal churches such as the Universal Church. A feature of the past ten years has been the appearance of several community churches, many of the "faith churches" type of church, common in the United States. Spiritism, gnosticism, rosacruicism and several new age type movements are strong. The largest Baptist churches are the 1st church with 2300 members, and Bacacheri with 940. At the same time many of the other churches are situated in the poorer suburbs of the city, and many have medical, dental and social work, creches and pre-schools attending to the needs of the extremely poor in the community. There is a special work with the deaf community in several churches, and some work with street children.



"Isn't it exciting how
God
works things out in
our lives?"
say Clem and Elaine.
"Unfortunately, we
don't always realise at
the time
that the things which
happen to us
are part of
**God's master
plan.**"

the master



plan

... unravelled by **Clem**
and **Elaine Mason**, new
volunteers with BMS

Clem and Elaine had both been Christians for about 40 years and had always felt called to serve the Lord in the local church, rather than overseas. However, they are both interested in missionary work and Elaine has been both local church BMS Secretary and also the District Missionary Secretary, and has served on BMS General Committee. Over recent years they have become aware through sermons, comments from friends and inner compulsion that this was not the limit of God's plans for them.

About six years ago when they were 50, they first heard about the BMS volunteer scheme, and made the decision that when they retired they would offer for short term voluntary service with BMS. As Clem's normal retirement age was 60, they figured this

still left them plenty of time for everything else they wanted to do! In 1994 they took a once in a lifetime holiday to visit their Link missionaries in Nepal. They had a wonderful time with Tim and Alison Lehané – which also included the challenge to do something themselves with BMS. This was delightfully vague and they were happy to leave it that way!

Clearly this was not precise enough for God and so he decided to take a hand. Two years ago he made it possible for Clem to retire early and take immediate pension. And so they offered to BMS and said they were willing to go anywhere in the world that they could find a use for them. Clem's working life had been spent in insurance and administration and Elaine's in home-making, so they did not feel that they had anything particular to offer, but felt BMS could always say 'no'! They were accepted by

the Volunteer Board to go to Nepal to help the Nepali Baptists set up administrative and budgeting systems.

And so the pieces of God's jigsaw were once again falling into place.

Clem and Elaine say they are both very weak on languages and don't like excessive heat or damp. "Yet – we are going to Kathmandu in April for five months. We know a mere handful of Nepali words and our trip will cover the whole of the hot season and the whole of the monsoon season. However, if God was planning the trip all those years ago we are sure he will have thought of all this and made some plans. When we come back we will be able to tell you what they were – but until then we will just have to leave them in his hands." ●

Clem and Elaine Mason come from Shirley Baptist Church, Southampton

getting into the action

The 28:19 Action Teams are almost at the end of their six month overseas' assignments and will burst onto the UK Baptist Church scene, at the end of April.

The 1999/2000 Teams have been in Nicaragua, Thailand, France, Brazil, Albania, India and Bangladesh involved in a variety of work. Here we read about two of the teams

Nicaragua, by Isabel Gearty

The first weekend we arrived we were asked to go to a place called Tipitapa where we evangelised on the streets and I preached and shared my testimony at the evening evangelistic service. Six people were saved the first day. I thought it would have taken a long time before we would be allowed to preach but God has been so good and gave me this amazing privilege, and even a translator. Not even the language barrier will stop the work of the Holy Spirit! A week later the same happened again; Lorraine led three people to Christ in the

street, I led four and then

Rick encouraged three people to rededicate their lives to Christ. God is working in amazing ways through us.

One Sunday evening I led the service and preached an evangelistic message.

At the end they moved the communion table from the front as people started swarming down for the call. Only five people were left in their seats. Many people were saved and others rededicated themselves asking God to re-light the fire.

We attended an all-night evangelistic event where all three of us shared and challenged. Forty people came down for the call that night. I don't know about England but in Scotland we would call that revival!

Bangladesh, by Helen Rowbottom

The beginning of our time in Bangladesh was spent at the Centre for

the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Savar. CRP provides treatment and physical, emotional, social and economic rehabilitation for paralysed people and was set up in 1979 by Valerie Taylor, a British physiotherapist. It is the only specialised centre in Bangladesh for people with spinal cord injuries. As well as its medical services, the Centre offers a school for children with cerebral palsy, a training institute and various income generation projects.

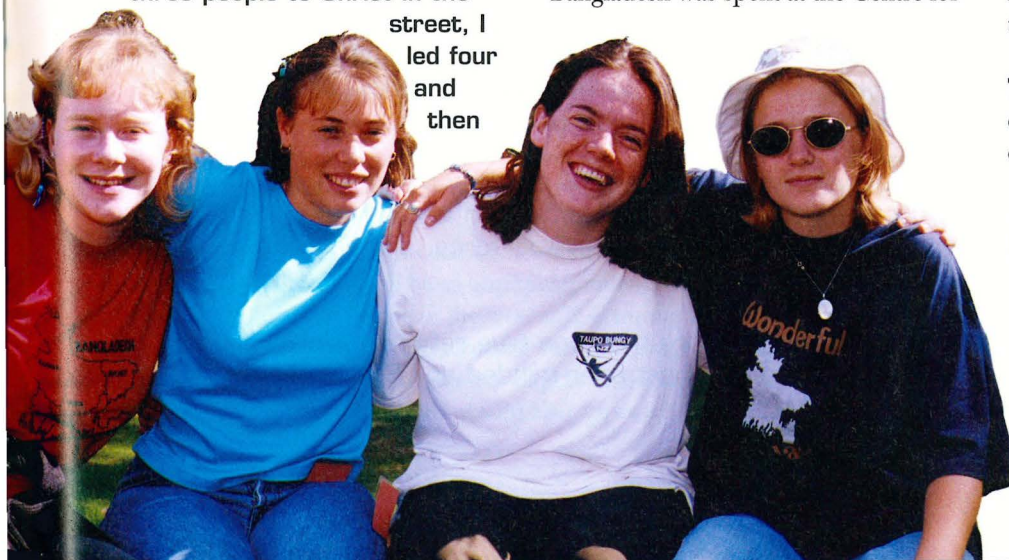
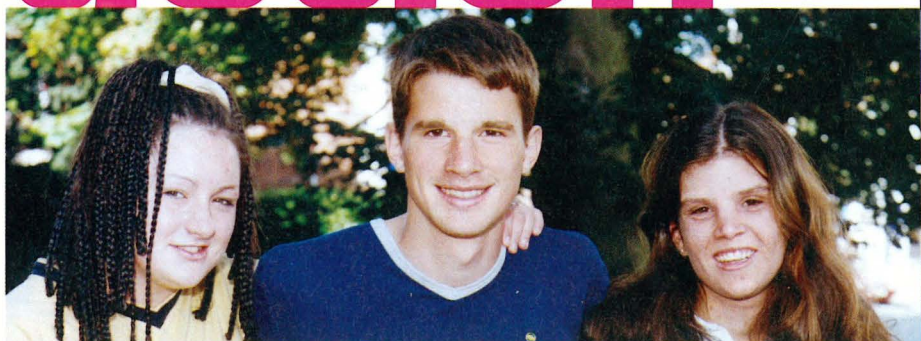
During our time here we taught English to the degree students, patients and trainee special needs teachers. Our painting skills also came on a treat as we helped in the wood workshop painting rocking horses to sell to expatriates. Many afternoons were taken up with horse riding and activities with the children with special needs. It was difficult at first to see these bright children with no control over their bodies, but we have found working with them is very rewarding.

Our prayer for the rest of our Action Team year is that we will remain focused on God in all that we do, and have opportunities to share the gospel. ●

For details of Action Team Tour venues, see ad on back cover

The Bangladesh Team are: Josie Hoare from Bristol; Keren Poole from Godalming; Helen Rowbottom from Norwich; Becky Bowers from Waterlooville.

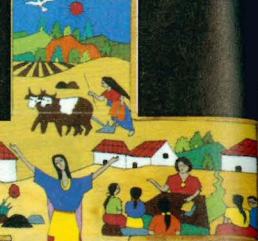
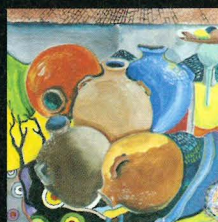
The Nicaragua Action Team below are:
Isabel Gearty from Livingstone;
Rick Watts from Cambridge and Lorraine Pratt from Clacks



What the Bible says:

Possession of skills is a gift from God!

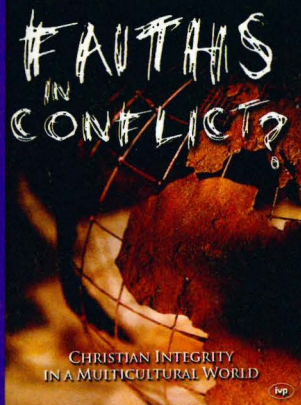
'Then the LORD said to Moses, See I have chosen Bezalel... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts - to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.' " **Exod 31: 1 - 5** (NIV)



A poll conducted in 60 countries at the end of the millennium revealed that:

- God is important to many people, but not of primary importance. Almost two-thirds of the world's people say God is quite significant in their lives, but much of that belief appears to be nominal.
- Worldwide, **87%** of people consider themselves part of a religion.
- Religiosity varies according to where you live. In West Africa, where Muslims are the largest group and the Catholic Church has made inroads, **99%** believe in God, 12 points above average. The least religious region is East Asia, which has **77%** believers. Figures for those who say they do not believe in any religion include: South Korea **46%**; Czech Republic **55%** and Hong Kong **64%**.
- If you've had a higher education you're more likely to have a lower level of belief. **52%** of college graduates are religious compared with **54%** of people with a secondary education and **70%** of those who have only completed primary school.
- Much of religion appears to be nominal. Although **87%** of respondents say they are followers of some religion, just **32%** practice their faith by attending services at least once a week, **35%** every now and then, and **33%** never or less than once a year. Women are more committed to attending than men. The attendance rate at services is higher for those under 24 years old.
- Among those who almost never go to church, the survey singled out people living in Western Europe (**48%**) and Eastern Europe (**44%**). But nine out of 10 West Africans and seven out of 10 Latin Americans attend church. Even though many people do not attend services, seven out of 10 respondents say they regularly meditate or pray in solitude.
- People in different cultures picture God in different ways. **45%** say they think of God as a person, while **30%** think of a force or spirit. Women, the elderly and people with less education tend to see God as a person. More-educated people prefer the idea of a spiritual force, or reject the notion of a superior being. Men are more prone to deny God's existence.
- **46%** of those surveyed said they believe there is more than one true religion, and **31%** think theirs is the only true faith. North Americans are the most open-minded and Europeans the most agnostic.

Source: Religion Today



book review

book reviews

BOOKS

Book Title: **Faiths in Conflict: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World**

Author: **Vinoth Ramachandra**

Publisher: **IVP** (ISBN 0-85111-650-7)

Reviewer: **Simon Jones, BMS Co-ordinator for London & the South East**

No of pgs: **192**

Price: **£7.99**

Vinoth Ramachandra is one of the most creative and exciting Christian thinkers to have emerged in the past decade. This book cements his position as one of a handful of voices everyone really ought to pay attention to.

It is not an easy read. Ramachandra writes with considerable wit, style and irony, but his subject matter is intrinsically complex. The book, based on the 1998 London Lectures in Contemporary Christianity, repays careful study, however.

Born in Sri Lanka – where he still lives – Ramachandra trained in the natural sciences in Asia and London and now travels widely with IFES bringing him into close contact and dialogue with students of all faiths and none.

Out of that experience he has written a carefully argued book that demonstrates how Christians can maintain their integrity in a world of many lifestyles and religions. Furthermore he demonstrates why the central figure of the Christian faith remains a perplexing, engaging and attractive person to people of all cultures.

Ramachandra begins by looking at the worlds of Islam and Hinduism. He gets behind the headlines, challenging the stereotypes many of us have unwittingly bought into. But more than that, he explains the history of how these two faiths have taken the shape they have. His discussion of the rise of Hindu-based nationalism in India is fascinating and sets current events in a historical background that makes praying intelligently for India a whole lot easier.

He then paints a portrait of Jesus – a chapter worth the price of the book on its own – before moving on to look at how people with such different faiths can not only live together in a divided world, but engage in constructive, worldview challenging dialogue.

His conclusion that only secular democracy forms the basis for such a dialogue will be as unpopular among some conservative Christian groups in the west as it is among the mullahs of Iran. But this reviewer for one was convinced by his carefully argued case. I suspect our Baptist forbears, Thomas Helwys and John Smith, would also approve.

If you want to grasp how three-quarters of our neighbours view the world and how we can open the conversation that might lead more of them to meeting Jesus, read, ponder and live this book.

The Travellers' Good Health Guide

Ted Lankester



Book Title: **The Travellers' Good Health Guide**

Author: **Ted Lankester**

Publisher: **Sheldon Press**
(ISBN 0-85969-827-0)

Reviewer: **Wendy Price, BMS Medical Secretary**

No of pgs: **230**

Price: **£6.99**

If you are planning to visit exotic climes, travelling for pleasure and most certainly if you are going abroad for work, this book would be a good travelling companion. The thought of being ill while away from home can be very worrying but this guide puts your mind at rest about the small problems to the more complicated illnesses without causing any unnecessary alarm.

The book is written by Dr Ted Lankester who is the director of InterHealth, an international travel health centre that provides a wide range of services for overseas travellers. Before his involvement with InterHealth, Ted was a GP who has travelled widely and spent seven years setting up health programmes in the Himalayas so much of the book comes from personal experience.

There are sections in the book that explain what is safe to eat and drink, how to cope with stress, together with advice on travelling with children. It also explains how to prevent and treat many problems that affect travellers.

Whatever your destination, The Travellers' Good Health Guide would be of help to you so that you avoid any unnecessary problems and on the other hand, enable you to deal with anything that arose. Happy travelling!



projects



prayer



people

PROJECTS UPDATE

**BMS youth projects:
SEX and Drugs,
Rock n' Roll**

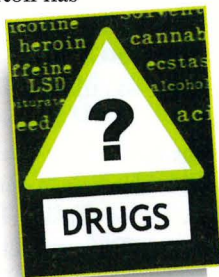


This BMS youth project began life in 1998 with the first of the projects, SEX literally hitting the churches in the October.

This was

followed a year later by Drugs and Rock n' Roll will be available from October 2000. The projects have been received extremely well by youth leaders and their young people highlighting the need for these world wide issues to be constantly addressed in our churches and schools. Although not primarily a fundraising project, so far Sex, Drugs, Rock n' Roll has raised £982.69.

The projects are available free of charge from BMS, although a £2 donation would be gratefully received.



PRAYER FOCUS







**Martin and Katrina Butterworth:
Kathmandu, Nepal**

Nothing happens quickly in Nepal, which can be very frustrating for goal-orientated Westerners. After 18 months of planning, talking and sending people for training, Martin and Katrina's church has finally started a 'Sunday school' (which meets on a Saturday, as does the church). There were 19 children on the first day and the women from the church are running the class, although it was the men who went on the training course – typical of Nepal according to Katrina and Martin. Katrina says, "It was tempting to just start up the 'Sunday school' myself. We see lots of examples of people from the West coming and setting up some good work, but as soon as they leave, the whole programme disintegrates. For something to be worthwhile, and lasting, it has to come from Nepalis".



This is also true of Martin's work as Quality Manager for Nepal Hydro-Electric (NHE). NHE actually requested someone to oversee quality control because they recognised they would not get contracts without reaching certain standards. However, Martin needs another engineer to work alongside him, freeing him to set up the systems NHE needs, but this has not happened. As far as his national colleagues are concerned, work is coming in and he is doing a good job. The frustration is in getting people to see further ahead.

Please pray:

-  That the new 'Sunday school' will thrive
-  That NHE will assign another engineer to work with Martin
-  For Martin's Nepali language study which he struggles with
-  Guidance for Katrina in how to use her time – juggling working at a clinic, the leprosy hospital and taking care of two small daughters, the needs are endless and a free doctor is always in demand



Bob and Ruth Ellett: Butwal, Nepal

Monsoon rains in 1998 brought devastating landslides to the Nepali town of Butwal and many lost their

homes. Thankfully the landslides at the end of 1999 were minimal but poverty forces many to remain in the path of future slips, suffering sleepless nights listening for the sound of falling rocks. The United Mission to Nepal would like to do more in the way of prevention of future slides and engineer Bob Ellett has been asked to evaluate areas in which UMN can best help. He says, "I would really value your prayers for judgement in this. There are many poor people who need to be helped and many real needs but I will need the wisdom of Solomon to cope with all the pressure."

Please pray:

p For the godly wisdom Bob is asking for

p For those living in fear of further landslides, that they would find peace in the God who is able to save and protect



**Wayne and Wendy Hadley:
La Talaudière, France**

Evangelism is not easy in France and Wayne and Wendy have had to come up with creative ideas for events to which people can be invited to meet with Christians and hear the gospel in a non-threatening way. One of the

most successful events was held in a local restaurant. Around 40 people attended, 15 of these non-church goers, and they came either at the invitation of people from the church or simply came in off the street for a meal and a drink. The church have found that people are at ease with the setting and they in turn feel at ease with singing gospel and giving testimony to the love of God in this setting.

Wayne was asked by another nearby church to help in a four-day evangelistic campaign. They went on the streets to sing and distribute tracts and invitations and had an open discussion evening about Who is Jesus? There was also a pizza evening at another local restaurant and many people were touched by the gospel. Thirty people from the church attended with a similar number of people with no church contact who listened to testimonies of lives changed by Jesus and even joined in with the singing and clapping. There were a number of contacts to be followed up and the church members were so encouraged that they want to do something similar again.

Please pray:

p For more and more new ideas of ways of reaching people in this difficult culture

p For continued desire to share with others

p For developing enthusiasm amongst church members to support such initiative so that the full burden will not fall to Wayne and Wendy



**John and Maria
Dyer: Natal,
Brazil**



John and Maria moved in January from Santa Catarina in southern Brazil, up to Natal in the North East. A major challenge in the North East is to train leaders for the churches of the interior, many of whom are unable to read or write. With this in mind, Maria has done a literacy course and will be very much involved in this stage of their work. This will require a whole new approach to the way in which the Dyers train leaders and they are asking for prayer for wisdom and understanding as they take up this challenge. In July, John sits for his PhD viva in London – the culmination of four years of research into theological education and the local church.

Please pray:

p That John and Maria would settle quickly into a new church, make new friends and build good relationships with their students

p For the wisdom they seek in knowing how to meet the specific educational needs of their new students

p For John's PhD viva – that he would be calm and would present himself and his research well



PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

Sidnei Borsol, Dois Vizinhos, Brazil

Now aged 27, Sidnei was born in Dois Vizinhos, the son of a traditional Italian family. He describes his life as a state of constant agitation, always running after something, and then when he reached it, always running after something else. He left his wife Juliana, and infant daughter Amanda because he thought he should move on in life.

One evening, three years ago, whilst in the town square drinking, he felt a great desire to go to church. He got in his car and felt he was being led, until he stopped in front of a Baptist church. He went in and found a meeting in progress, people praising God. During the second chorus a voice said to him, 'Kneel down, because from today your life will change.' He resisted, but the voice insisted. He fell to his knees, crying, and without fully understanding what had happened he realised it was God who was speaking to him and he found what he had been seeking all his life. He went home, and asked Jesus to take care of his life.

Three days later his wife and daughter returned, and he asked his wife to forgive him. In time she did, and also came to know Jesus.

Sidnei says, "I am now trying to

serve the Lord, and see it as my task to set aside a part of my wages for the distribution of Bibles, which I do joyfully. God is now revealing to me that he wants me to work with the teenagers of our church to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus."

Today, Sidnei and Juliana have another daughter, Emanuela.

From John Furmage, involved in church work with BMS in Dois Vizinhos, Brazil.



Jayamangal Mahananda Bolangir, India

Jayamangal was a Hindu but in 1993, after reading the Bible for eight years, God spoke to him in a very powerful way, and he accepted Jesus as his Saviour. Later he married a Christian girl, Anita, and they now have a three-year-old son, Raja, and a baby daughter – born 23 December 99. The spiritual qualities of Jayamangal have been recognised and he has been elected as a deacon in two congregations where he has been a member. At present he lives on the mission compound. He has trained as a stenographer. He has some part time work in the Diocese of Sambalpur and has been working with the hostels and sponsorship programme – a job now soon to end so he is looking for some more work that will enable him to manage his family and enable him to be more involved in the church work.

From Carole Whitmee, recently retired after over 30 years service with BMS in India.



Jayamangal Mahananda

People Wanted

Could this be you?

Bulgaria

Pastor

An experienced Pastor for pastoral and evangelistic work and training of leadership is needed by the Baptist Union of Bulgaria. Experience of church strategy and administration would be very useful in assisting the Union in its development and growth. You would need to learn the language, and a minimum of five years' commitment is being suggested. At present there are about 40 congregations and 12 full-time pastors, most of whom have had little formal training.

South Central Asia

Engineer

An engineer (micro hydro power) is required to help in the development of small scale hydro power schemes harnessing the region's considerable water resources to provide power to rural communities. You will also have research and development opportunities, for which relevant past experience would be particularly helpful.

South Central Asia

Education Consultant

Educational/Teacher Training Consultants needed. Two separate or overlapping posts for experienced educators of students with visual impairments, to advise on and contribute to planning, preparation and delivery of appropriate educational service to school-aged young people, through the training of national teachers and resources personnel. You would work as part of an international team.

South Central Asia

Health Director

Health Director required. This is a senior post. The person will be responsible for ensuring that programmes and projects within the Health Department follow mission goals and objectives. This involves long range planning, the monitoring of financial management and supporting health personnel in professional growth. Experience/training in managing health professionals would be essential. Experience in a multinational environment and/or in an overseas post desirable.

Nepal

Services Director

Services Director - to be based in INF Headquarters in Pokhara. The post holder will be responsible for all INF support services with the aim of enabling INF projects and personnel to 'get on with the job'. This includes computer, mechanical, building and electrical services, guest houses and a network of service offices providing logistical support. Qualifications required: Bachelor's degree plus two years' relevant experience. Personnel qualification preferred.

North Africa

Therapist

Special Education Teacher / Recreational Therapist needed to work with medical personnel attached to rehabilitation centre. You would help reorientate clients to appropriate programmes within the centre.

This is only a very small selection of the kind of vacancies we have available at any one time. Our 'People Wanted' list is changing all the time. Please contact us, and ask if we have anything for you. See page 35.

Baptist House News

Welcome to Julie Wilson Manager for Volunteer Development

Julie has taken on the newly-created post of Manager for Volunteer Development within the BMS Department for World Mission. She comes from a background in charity work, having worked for Oxfam as Campaigns Officer and Scope as Community Marketing Manager.

Julie spent her youth in Brighton Road Baptist Church, Horsham, and over the years she has been involved in leading Scripture Union and Crusader groups. She has also recently participated in short-term mission visits work in Africa, and in a YWAM Discipleship Training School in Australia.

On returning to the UK, Julie believed she was being called to continue with mission work. "Taking the BMS short-term programmes into the year 2000 and beyond will be a challenging and exciting opportunity," she said. "So many people in this generation are ready to 'just do it'. I'll have the privilege of helping develop effective and life-changing volunteer opportunities to allow people of all ages to serve God overseas."



Below and far left: stoves provided by Love in Action
Below: unloading wood from a lorry, also supplied by Love in Action



made two months previously assisting a different set of villages. Love in Action has been responsible for the hiring of lorries and workers to collect and transport the wood and stoves. The wood has been purchased from a



BMS Relief Fund Grants

Kosovo £39,250

Two grants, £6,550 and £32,700, have been given from the BMS Relief Fund to help Kosovan families get through the harsh winter. The smaller grant has paid for approximately 20,000 concrete blocks, which have been used to provide screening walls, to give families in shared accommodation some privacy. The larger grant has enabled Love in Action to buy 200 stoves and wood fuel, providing winter fuel for cooking and heat to villages to the north and east of Prishtina. A similar grant was

safe area because people have been killed or injured whilst trying to collect their own with unexploded mines and bombs still littering the land.

Chechnya £3,000

A BMS Relief Fund grant of £3,000 has been made to supply aid to 2,000 Chechen people (around 500 families), displaced by the conflict in Chechnya. The money has provided food, clothing and blankets and has been given via Hungarian Baptist Aid and Christian Mission Vera, in co-operation with Vladikavkaz Baptist Church.

Venezuela \$5,000

The heavy rains that brought floods and mudslides to the Caribbean coast of Venezuela caused tens of thousands of deaths and left at least half a million people homeless. BMS has given a Relief Fund grant of US \$5,000 to help in this crisis via Baptist World Aid/ National Baptist Convention of Venezuela.

Thailand £5,000

BMS supports the work of the Burma Border Consortium (BBC), an organisation which helps to meet the needs of around 120,000 refugees who have fled from Myanmar (Burma) to Thailand. BMS has given a relief grant of £5,000 to help with the BBC's programme of food, health and education for these refugees.

Signs and Blunders

Congratulations Ann!

BMS missionary Ann Bothamley has been made an MBE in this year's New Year's Honours List (Overseas section) for services to healthcare in India.

She first heard of the honour when the representative of the British High Commission in New Delhi rang her long-distance, while she was in the middle of a visit to a school in Vellore, India. She said "I had two seconds to make a response. I hesitated, and then I said 'yes'."

Ann, who has been a nurse and hostel parent with BMS in India since 1967, is very modest about her achievements. Speaking of her award she said, "This is an honour, and if I can witness through it to bring honour to the Lord, then I'll gladly accept it."



Ann and Marlene with hostel children



Check Out March/April 2000

March 2000

Arrivals

Derek Punhard from Curitiba, Brazil

Departures

Derek Punhard to Curitiba, Brazil

April 2000

Arrivals

Sue Headlam from Chandraghona, Bangladesh

Departures

Ken & Ruth Robb to South Central Asia

Ross and Martha King moved to Almaty, Kazakhstan, to teach business principles. As Christians they were also active in a small group of believers and enjoyed Bible studies. They also liked to give away Bibles. So when the Kings were invited to a traditional Kazakh wedding, they knew what they would give as a gift. Martha put all she had - 30 Bibles and 30 pieces of Christian literature, some designed for children and some for adults, into a canvas bag and they went to the wedding celebration.

At the appropriate time in the festivities, she started giving the children her gifts. Soon many eager children crowded around her. Then adults got interested and asked for books too. When the patriarch of the clan stood to make the customary toast to the bride and groom, he proudly held up his new Bible. In response the 200 other adults and children did the same - all waving Bibles and books they had received from Martha King's canvas bag.

She couldn't believe her eyes, but she could believe that it had happened. "I only had 30 copies of each when I left our apartment," she said. "But as long as people came wanting a book, there was something there for them... When the books ran out, no one else asked me for one." (EBPS)



Shortly after arriving in Bangladesh on our first term of service, I had to return to the airport to clear our personal effects through customs. Looking down the packing list of one of our barrels, the customs officer asked to see the boat we had in there - which left me mystified! "What boat?!" I said, and he pointed me to the list. "Oh, that" I said. "That's not a boat!" But there was no letting go - "It says a boat on your list!" So, with a muted groan and a sigh of resignation I started to unpack the whole barrel until I found the offending item. It was then his turn to be mystified... as I showed him the gravy boat we'd packed months earlier!

From David Kerrigan,
BMS Director for Mission, and former BMS missionary.

world

mission link

'On your bike' for BMS

Members of Calne Baptist Church got on their bikes to raise funds for BMS, using the route along the new Millennium cycle path between Chippenham and Calne. No one was left out: the toddlers did a sponsored trike ride, up and down the church driveway.

Whilst the more energetic were biking, other members joined in a sponsored 'hymnathon' and one lady did a sponsored 'knitathon' which lasted the whole day. As the bikers returned to finish off the day with a cream tea, a church musician took requests for favourite hymns, subject to sponsorship, of course!

Everyone agreed they had had a really fun day, and altogether £1,077 was raised for BMS.



'On your bike' for BMS

'On your bike' for BMS

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'On your bike' for BMS

'On your bike' for BMS

WALLINGTON
MISSIONARY MART
& AUCTIONS



A REGISTERED
CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Spring cleaning?

Having a clear-out of furniture or household goods? Wallington Missionary Mart and Auctions are a registered charity who sell goods donated to them and hand back the proceeds to the mission agency of the donor's choice (after expenses have been deducted).

The Missionary Mart operates from a warehouse in Wallington, Surrey. They sell furniture, household items and clothing.

Wallington Missionary Auctions hold auctions six times a year at Crusader

Hall, Wallington. Items such as antique furniture, jewellery, antique books, clocks, and porcelain are auctioned.

Last year £2,050 was donated to BMS through goods sold through Wallington Missionary Mart and Auctions.

If you would like more details on how you could contribute goods to sell or auction contact The Missionary Mart, 99 Woodmansterne Road, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey SM5 4EG. Tel no 0208 643 3616.



Using your gifts for God

Hillary Tenzing-Tooth, a member of Kirkintilloch Baptist Church, is someone who

believes in being confident in sharing the gifts God has given her. She started her own craft business, Kara Crafts, four years ago. Kara is Greek for 'joy', and she aims to bring joy into people's lives by sharing how to be creative. Kara Crafts is a range of silk paintings, decorative glass, vases and candlesticks.

Face to Face

"It was the best missions presentation I have ever been to." That was a comment from one person attending the Face to Face roadshow when it visited Lancaster. Many others agreed with between 100 and 300 people asking for further information about world mission at each of the four venues visited. Face to Face was organised by local EMA representatives, bringing together different mission agencies in the region. Each event was in the form of an exhibition and a multimedia presentation with contributions from the various agencies, including BMS.

mb

magazine

too good to keep to yourself

The Arts in Mission

Now it's your opportunity to find out more, to give, to pray and to go...

INFORMATION AND PRAYER RESOURCES

I would like to find out more about BMS work in:

- ☐ Brazil
☐ India

I would like to start receiving news/prayer letters from:

- ☐ John & Norma Clark
☐ Derek & Joanna Punchard
☐ Clem & Elaine Mason

so that I can pray for their part in making Jesus known worldwide.

GOING

I would like to find out more about:

- ☐ the vacancies advertised on page 31, especially(please state)
☐ other long-term vacancies
☐ being a BMS Volunteer
☐ overseas Action Teams (Year Teams)
☐ UK Year Action Teams
☐ Summer Teams

Giving to BMS

I would like to give financially to BMS. Please send me:

- ☐ Ways of Giving leaflet which tells me about all the different ways I can give
☐ how I can join the BMS Birthday Scheme
☐ details of the BMS Relief Fund
☐ I would like to order the BMS WOW DIY Action Pack (qty) @ £5.99 each (YC22)
☐ I would like to order Hope in Despair study booklet (qty) @ £2.50 each (BK09)

For both of the above please add p&p as follows: Orders under £10 add £1.50; between £10 & £30 add £2.40; orders over £30 FREE

Please fill in your details in the name and address section below and also complete payment details

Anything else not mentioned above (please specify)

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Address.....
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..... Post Code

Please cut out whole page or photocopy and send to:
Rob Vaines, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA

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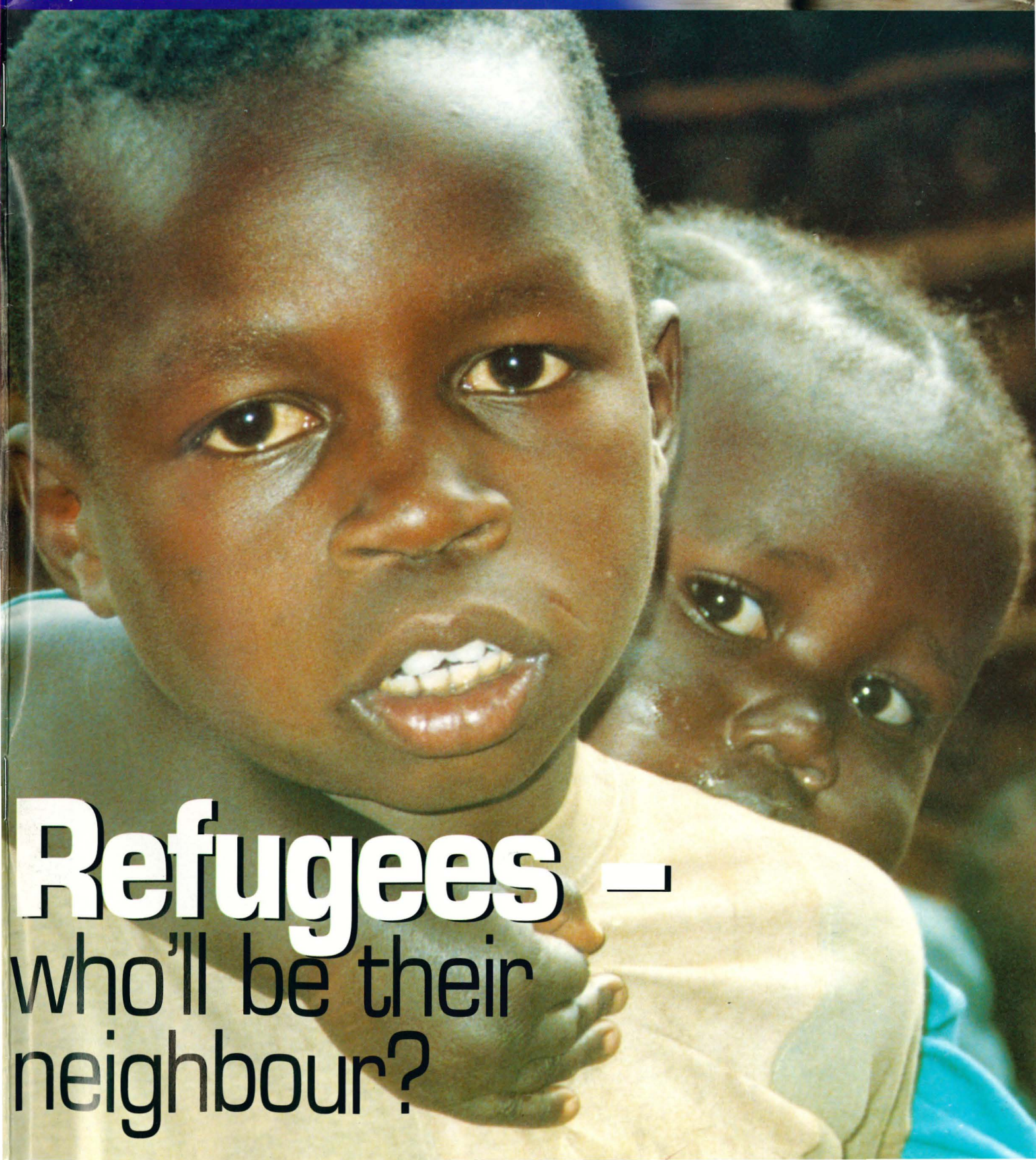
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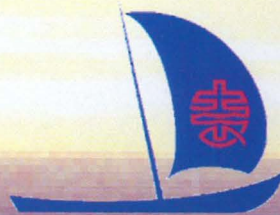
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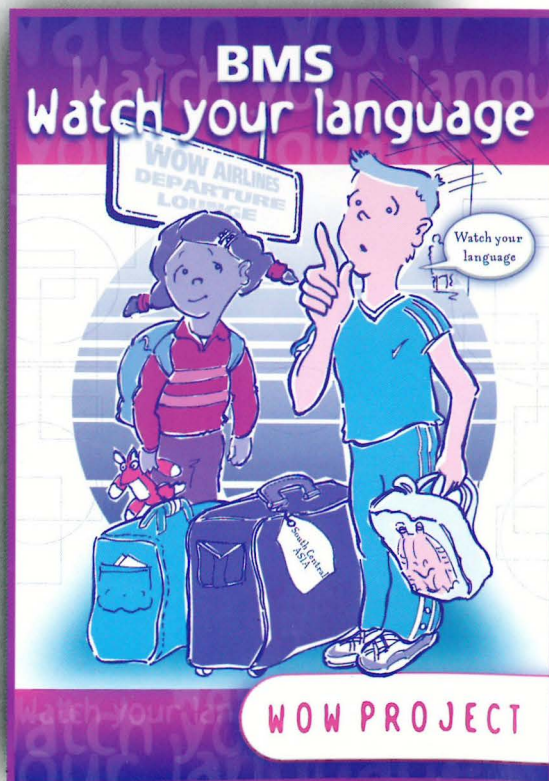
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Watch Your Language

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Watch Your Language project books are available free of charge from BMS. (To order please use form on page 35). The project runs until the end of December.



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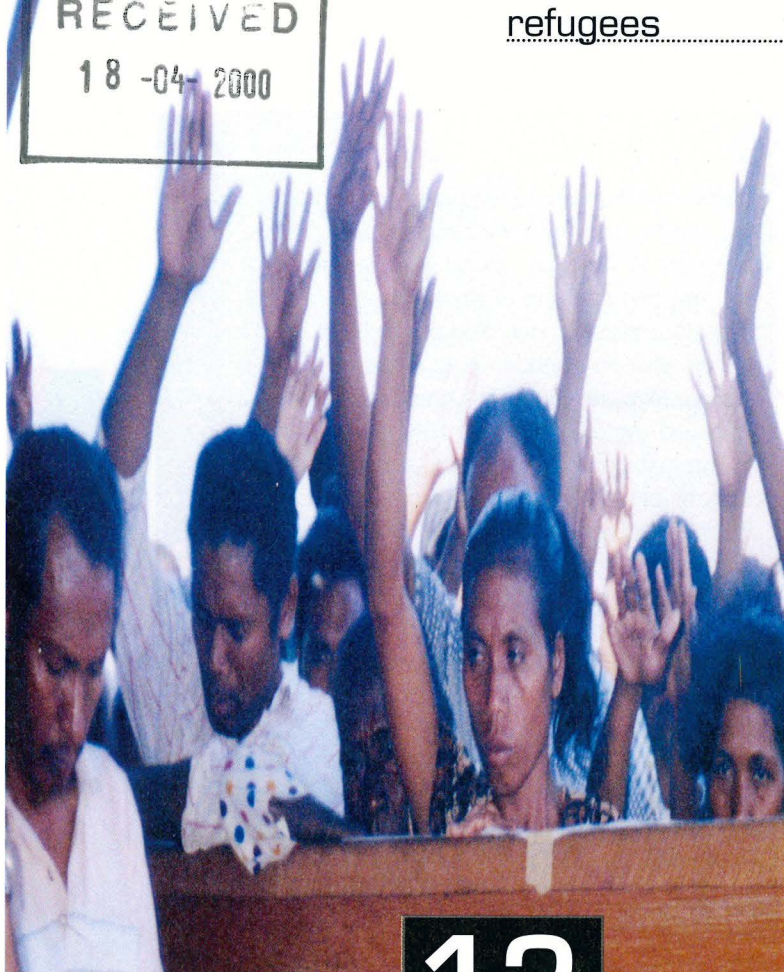
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COVER PICTURE : CHILDREN IN REFUGEE CAMP OUTSIDE NAIROBI, KENYA (STEVE FLASHMAN)

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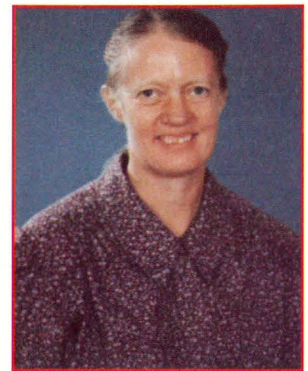
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India

Widow forgives

Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines worked with lepers in the state of Orissa for nearly 30 years. He and his sons were sleeping in their car outside Baripada Hospital in January 1999, when Hindu militants attacked. Armed with bows and arrows, sticks and clubs, the mob prevented father and sons

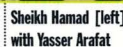


Gladys Staines

She has had warnings

Qatar First church to be built

However the government has for many years quietly allowed Christian communities of Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and other Protestant denominations to meet informally for private worship services, provided prior notification has been given to the local authorities. This is in contrast to other



The decision which the Gulf Times hailed as “yet another sign of Qatar opening up to new vistas of freedom and religious tolerance” has led to speculation that a plot of

Warplanes dropped four bombs near a Christian school, killing 14 children and a teacher, and wounding 17. "The bombs landed where they were supposed to land," a government official at the Sudanese Embassy in Nairobi told Reuters. He said the camp, 500 miles south of Khartoum, is part of a military camp. A Catholic missionary teaching at the school commented, "There are no military targets near the school. This is just a slaughter of the innocents." (Religion Today)

land will be allocated for use as a Christian church in Doha. The property would be divided by common consent among the various Christian communities, to construct individual church facilities.

This decision has been supported by Qatar's progressive young emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who came to power in 1995, ousting his own father in a bloodless coup. He then went on to make deals with Israel, lifted local media censorship, gave women the right to vote and run for office, and oversaw sweeping decentralisation of government ministries and departments.

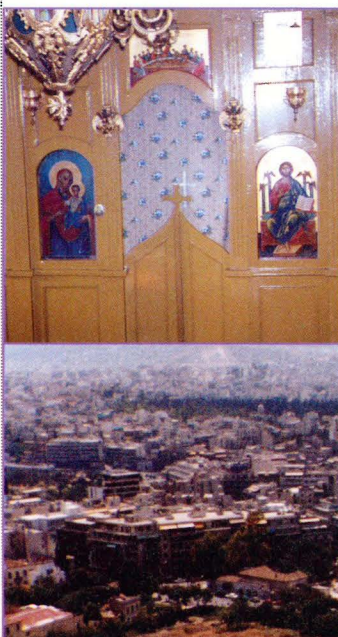
A Western church leader who was born and raised on the Arabian peninsula commented, "The Gulf is shaping up to being a real testing ground for whether Islam can live with diversity in its midst." (Maranatha

Newswatch)

Greece New wave of persecution

An evangelical Christian radio station that had been

running for 11 years has been taken off the air. Police swooped in at the end of 1999 and shut down Channel Station 2000, a Christian radio station which reached five million Greeks in the greater Athens area. They seized a satellite link and arrested 73-year-old retired pastor, Lakis Regas, who was working as a technician. The authorities accused the station of operating without a proper licence. Channel Station 2000 was also accused of interfering with radio frequencies used by the Navy. But station engineers



said the claim was unfounded and no evidence had been produced to demonstrate the interference.

Station Director, Thanos Karbonis, said "We've been proclaiming the good news of Christ for 11 years without any problems. Channel Station 2000 is very fruitful; it has brought many people to Christ. Mr Karbonis also believed the Greek Orthodox Church was behind, what he called, this 'censorship operation'.

In 1994, Hellas 62, Greece's only evangelical

TV station was forced to close after coming under strong opposition from the Orthodox Church.

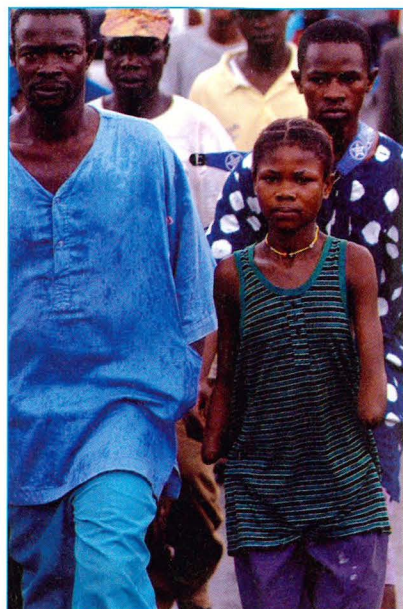
The Fellowship of Free Evangelical Churches in Greece believes the shutdown of the radio station is "further evidence of stronger persecution of minority faiths in Greece."

This is one of several incidents that have taken place in Greece recently against evangelical Christians. In Thessaloniki a pastor stood trial for operating an illegal church – a charge that was later dropped. Three Greek Christians have also been given suspended jail sentences for running a Christian centre in Larissa, central Greece, in a case in which officials from the Greek Orthodox Church supported the action against the centre. The government has also refused permission for a children's camp, which has been run by Evangelical churches for 68 years, to operate this year. (CSW)

Sierra Leone "Let us forgive"

The country of Sierra Leone is struggling on towards establishing a permanent peace. Its leaders are trying to work out the details of a fragile peace accord signed last July by the government and the heads of two factions of rebels. This accord was the culmination of a process initiated and supported by the country's religious groups, both Christian and Muslim.

A 13-member ecumenical team organised by the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World

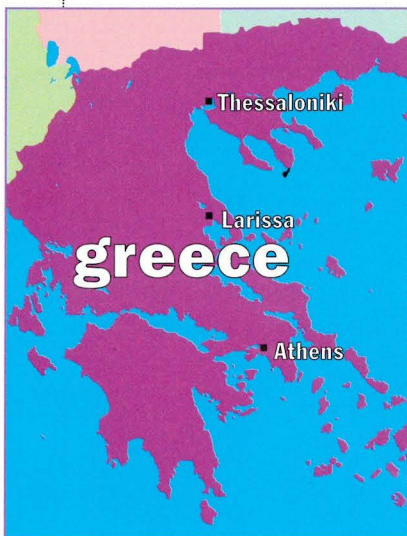


A 13 year old girl who had her hands hacked off.



Council of Churches recently visited Sierra Leone. They visited a camp that housed hundreds of thousands of amputees, victims of one of the most common kinds of terror carried out by the rebels.

What stood out above everything else was a lack of bitterness among the war's many victims, who seemed to want reconciliation rather than vengeance. The residents at this camp sang a song, "Let us forgive." One resident told Richard Parkins, a team member, that he would be satisfied if the rebels "would just say they are sorry." It seems that not only the amputees, but even those who were not profoundly affected by the violence seemed willing to



say publicly, "Let's move on."

In the nine years of conflict the churches have earned the respect of the people, commented Parkins. "They stayed with people during the conflict, church workers risked their lives, and eventually negotiated with the rebels. Many people told me that the churches have been the glue of the society here."

The peace process will bring former rebel leaders into some positions of authority in the government, and allows for the immediate return of former rebels into the population. (Episcopal News Service)

Colombia Saving souls with soap operas?

Spanish speakers throughout North and South America are coming to Christ through 'En Familia' (In Family), a video series produced and directed by John Magyar, a Baptist.

'En Familia' consists of 12 short dramas that look at some of the most serious problems faced by families today. They are produced in the form of telenovelas, which are popular with TV viewers throughout Latin America.

"It is produced at about

a middle-class to upper-middle-class cultural level," said Magyar, "and because of its 'soap opera' quality, it has appeal to all socioeconomic groups."

The average 'En Familia' episode runs for ten to 12 minutes and covers issues such as abortion, aging parents, AIDS, child discipline, divorce, drugs and homosexuality. Small groups gather weekly to watch an episode; then discuss what they have seen.

Eneried Romero and her pastor husband, Isai, have used "En Familia" extensively as an outreach to non-believers around their church. She said the four themes that had impacted women most were spousal abuse, divorce, child discipline and communication between husband and wife.

In the episode on spousal abuse a 'macho' husband heaps hateful insults on his wife. "Many women identify with the woman in this video and cry



as they see their lives reflected in the drama," said Eneried. In one case, she went on to say, "a woman left the group with the

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

Unless they're mine, children can be as cheeky as they like – well, providing they're also charming and almost always they are.

I seem to gather an entourage of urchins wherever I go, especially in rural villages. The group in this picture are from a small settlement in the south of Bangladesh. Gorgeous children full of fun, smiles and curiosity. They darted into almost every photograph, and taking their picture was partly my attempt to appease them. It didn't work of course but I'd rather have their laughter and mischief than sullen or frightened kids.

When I look at the photograph, two things stand out for me. First, they're poor in a way almost no-one in this country experiences. Inadequate diet, rough shelters, sparse clothing. And few choices. They can't move to another area; they can't visit a careers guidance officer to decide their future prospects; they'll never change their place in society.

Second, they'll almost certainly never hear of Jesus. Countries like Bangladesh have a tiny Christian population, and on their own they've little opportunity or resources to make Jesus known. A high birth rate generating a demographic bulge for under 18s does nothing to make it easier to spread the good news to children.

Children are a special strategic focus for BMS. Often they're exploited; even more often they're simply neglected. Jesus refused to let that happen to children. Any Christian manifesto should establish a basic right for children to hear and experience God's love. That's our aim, and with the right resources which include prayer, people, finance and commitment much more can be done. The children in this picture should know and get the chance to experience the good news. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



realisation that she is really someone of value before God, and that Christ gave his life to save and heal her.”

Nearly 600 sets of ‘En Familia’ materials have been distributed in 18 countries.

In Asunción, Paraguay, the drama on alcohol abuse led to the creation of an alcohol co-dependency group. Then a church was started.

“The timing is right for ‘En Familia’ in the Spanish-speaking world,” said Magyar. “People are just hungry for Christ. God has just been really, really moving in Latin America. It’s one of those moments in time where you either take advantage of the opportunity or you miss it.”

Magyar concluded, “Through ‘En Familia’ Baptists have an opportunity to seize the moment. We’ve never produced anything that has opened more doors faster to present the good news of Jesus Christ.” (Baptist Press)

Japan New church planting initiative

A new church planting movement is helping to renew weary Christian workers in Japan by focusing on the transforming power of the gospel. The Church Planting Institute is a network of missionary agencies that mentors leaders and has been likened to a personal renewal movement reminding Christian workers to draw close to God, and minister in his



power – not their own.

Evangelism in Japan is extremely difficult. Only three per cent of Japan’s 125 million population are professing Christians, and the nation’s Protestant congregations average 35 members. Some towns do not have a church. Missionaries struggle with the complex language and culture, and can get easily discouraged, and as a result Japan has been called ‘a missionary’s graveyard’.

More than 450 foreign missionaries and Japanese nationals have completed the training course. It includes principles of church planting and evangelism, and has additional topics such as ‘Inspiring worship’, ‘Discipleship by Grace’, and



‘How to reach Japanese men’.

The conference refreshes pastors and missionaries. One person said, “I think maybe I dare to hope again, to dream again.” Another commented, “It refreshed me by taking our eyes off the daily struggles and turning our focus back on Jesus.” (Religion Today)

Vinoth Ramachandra

Nice Guys or Real Guys?

In 1936, Dale Carnegie wrote a book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, that sold more than five million copies over the next two decades. More American Christians read it than they did the Bible.

Carnegie was a commercial salesman, upset by his shortness of stature, who overcame his feelings of inferiority by giving evening lectures on the art of public speaking. He realised that in a nation of immigrants, what people feared most was making fools of themselves whenever they opened their mouths. Carnegie’s prescription was simple: always smile, never argue with people, never disagree with what they say, never find fault, be a ‘nice guy’. The way to get along with people is to be like them.

Jesus, the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles were not ‘nice guys’. They were controversial non-conformists. They rocked the boat, asked embarrassing questions, provoked ridicule and hostility. This does not mean that they spoke without careful thought, nor that they were never silent. But whether silent or outspoken, they did not avoid pain and seek popularity, influence and success at the cost of faithfulness to God’s truth. Little wonder that their lives usually ended in martyrdom.

It seems that many Christian leaders today are anxious to be seen as ‘nice guys’. Always charming, never at a loss for words, eager to please everybody, shunning theological debate, never admitting their moral struggles, doubts and failures lest their reputation is tarnished. It usually takes a sudden and shocking public scandal to reveal to others that all was not as lovely as it seemed.

To be a ‘nice guy’ or a ‘real guy’? That is the question. •

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES





Lee Bray's diary

LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Continuing the extracts from his diary.

Friday 29

The day begins at 6.30am with an encounter with an extremely large spider in the shower. It takes two grown men (Andrew and me), a shoe, a bucket and a stiff broom to defeat the beast!

Today we travel to Chandragonha where Sue Headlam's work is principally based, and then onto Chittagong.

Our first visit is to a small Christian family in their tiny home. The lady shows us the loom on which she weaves bags. The 'bag industry' has bought them a television and a fridge. The technology looks a little incongruous in their rudimentary little hut.

We drive to a narrow street, and are taken through a gate in the wall and into another world - the slums of Chittagong. Hundreds of people live here, crammed

together, in homes smaller than most garden sheds. Just inside the gate is the tap that supplies their water - for drinking, cooking, washing - one tap, hundreds of people. Their homes are largely built out of scrap. We are shown into one. In the gloom we can make out three 'rooms', each about the size of our stair cupboard at home. Twenty people live here.

The sights, sounds and smells of Bangladesh crowd in. We are taken down one particularly smelly street with a central drain and, at the end, the latrines. The stench is nauseating, but there are homes right here. Next to the toilets, in the most appalling stench, is a tiny one-room shack, home to a family of four, piled high with televisions for repair.

Our driver hurries us on. Although we were oblivious to it there is danger about. The TV repairman and his family are Christians. If we dawdle there it will be thought that we are giving them money, and this would be bad ... (Who for? Us? Them? The slum community?)

We are taken to the home of the slum community leader. We are asked to make ourselves comfortable and then, in the middle of some of the world's most abject poverty, we are served a small meal - samosas, crisps, sweetmeats, water and sweet tea. We can't be sure of its origin, but in the face of such utter generosity we cannot possibly refuse it. All they want is to serve us, and they expect nothing in return.

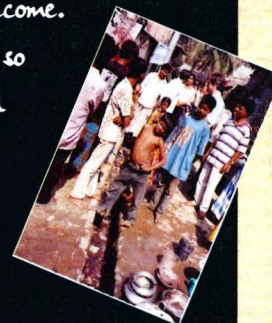
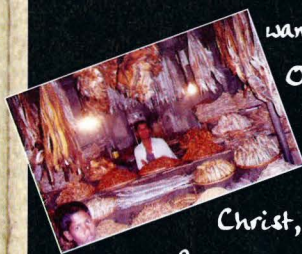
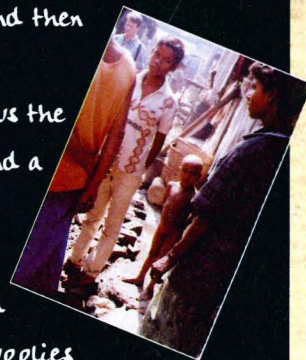
On this trip I have been humbled again and again. Everywhere we are made so welcome. But nothing so far, (and I think perhaps nothing ever again) will make me feel so small as this. Here, in a Bangladesh slum, in a Muslim home, I have encountered Christ, and he has served me. These people's generosity puts me to shame.

In the afternoon we are due to visit the Under-S's Clinic, but it has been closed for "inspection" by the government. This has never happened before, and it seems likely that the timing to coincide with our intended visit is no accident. What is it that we ought not to see?

On arrival at Chandragonha Hospital we climb the hill to Sue's flat. In the evening we stroll down to the village with our driver to visit the barbers. A haircut and shave takes over 30 minutes - I have never been shaved with such care and attention, no stray hairs go down my neck, John has every grey hair clipped from his moustache, a head massage is thrown in too - and the whole thing costs only the equivalent of 25p each.

During the night the jackals howl. They come in packs, carrying rabies Sue says. But they are outside, and we are inside!

To be continued next issue.



who cares?

Jan Kendall reports on a visit to a Serbian refugee camp

It was big news for the last couple of years, but now it has faded from the front pages and TV screens. Bosnia. Yugoslavia. Kosovo. The very words conjure up thoughts of hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled their homes, because of unspeakable atrocities, in tidal wave upon tidal wave of ethnic cleansing. Serbs, Croats, Kosovars, Albanians, Bosnians – they have all suffered.

Recently Fiona Pimlott, BMS Youth and Children's Co-ordinator and Andrew North, BMS Regional Secretary for Europe visited a Serbian refugee camp near the town of Bicske in Hungary, run by Hungarian Baptist Aid. Altogether about 500 Serbian refugees live in blocks, row upon row, which once served as temporary accommodation for construction workers. Each family lives in a space about 20 foot square, with minimal furniture. Families like Reuben and Judith and their three children, who fled northern Yugoslavia.

In their living area they have two sets of bunks pushed together providing beds for the parents and baby on the lower level, and for the two grown-up children at the top. An extra bunk bed provided a spare bottom bunk that was made into a sofa. There were two wardrobes for clothes, a table and two chairs, a TV and a hat stand. They share a kitchen and bathroom with other families in the block.

Reuben is also a pastor, and in conjunction with the 40-member Baptist church at Bicske, he leads a service for the Serbian refugees in the camp. The Hungarians who help out are also Serbian speakers. Reuben and his family had had a hard time previously just being Baptist Christians because they were thought of as a sect. But this is a good opportunity for the Serbs to get together, finding refuge and security in God, before the time comes when they have to return home, each of them to a different place. It has been an encouragement that numbers of those attending are increasing.

On Saturday mornings Reuben's daughter Vicky runs a children's club. Fiona said, "The first thing I noticed about her was her brilliant smile. Standing there in front of the children, wearing jeans and a fleecy jumper and singing 'Don't build your house on the sandy land', she looked just like any other children's worker. Vicky told me she was one of the few girls in the camp, and she missed female company. She told me on her arrival her family had been put into quarantine for six weeks following the procedure that all refugees have to go through. I asked her what it was like. 'Yuk' she replied. And she still smiled."

Judith cried when Andrew and Fiona visited the camp, because at last she felt someone had remembered their plight. People had not been bothering with Serbian refugees.

As they left the camp they prayed with the family. Andrew prayed in English for peace and reconciliation. Judith put her arm around Fiona's back, and Fiona put her arm on her shoulder. As Andrew continued praying there were huge tears streaming down Judith's face. A response to a small act of kindness and care. ●

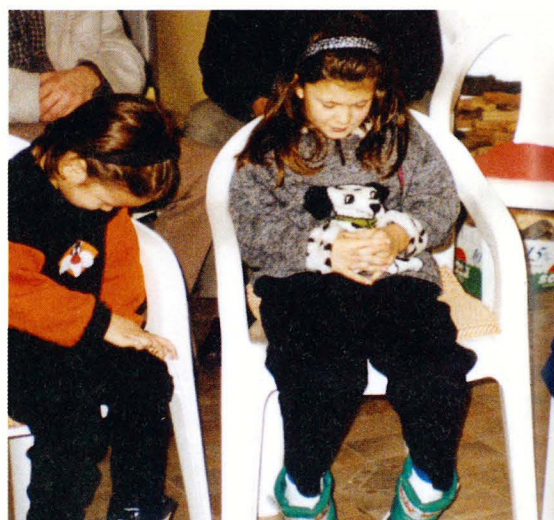
Jan Kendall is *mb* Editor

Pictures:

- 1 Judith and youngest child
- 2 Refugee camp near Bicske, Hungary
- 3 Serbian children praying in the children's club
- 4 Andrew North, BMS Regional Secretary for Europe, with Andrea and David, translators
- 5 Fiona Pimlott, BMS Youth and Children's Co-Ordinator, with Vicky
- 6 Burnt out buildings in Kosovo
- 7 Soldier patrolling a road block in Kosovo
- 8 Kosovan refugee carrying his possessions



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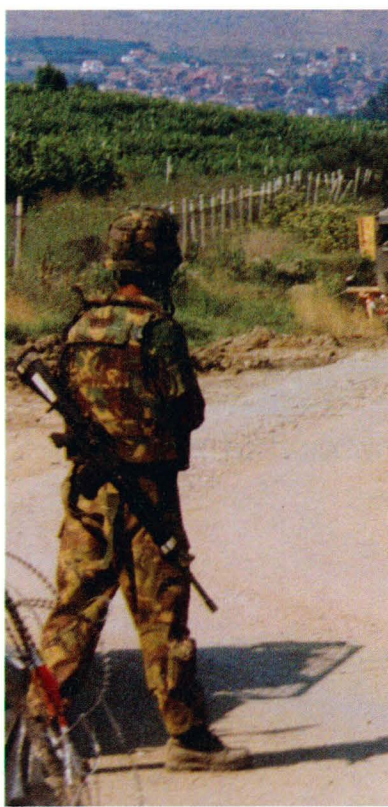
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KOSOVO Update

8

In Kosovo itself teams of people from Europe and America, including BMS personnel are helping to rebuild lives.

The Kosovans have largely returned home – a term which usually meant returning to a pile of ashes. One American observer reported: “The Serbian paramilitaries were very methodical in the destruction of homes. They piled furniture up in one of two rooms, poured on kerosene, and then lighted it so that it would catch fire to the ceiling and roof area. Generally in front of every house there would be a gully full of half-burnt clothing. That was what remained of the extra clothing people in the dead of winter tried to take with them to keep warm. The military would make them dump their extra clothing, then they would pour kerosene on the pile and destroy what clothes they needed for warmth.”

Groups are helping to rebuild houses and provide people with basic living amenities. BMS Relief Fund grants totalling £65,300 have provided woodburning stoves and wood fuel for villages to the north and east of Prishtina.

BMS engineer David Wheeler has been instrumental in helping the refugee families. Working together with Medair, a Swiss emergency relief organisation, David has arranged for concrete blocks to be made. Medair's main brief has been to put roofs on houses, but typically it has been barns that have been re-roofed, which, in effect, has created wind tunnels. The blocks have been made by Sejdia, a Kosovan refugee, who came to know David when he volunteered to help him build a kitchen in Tirana refugee camp. David comments, “The blocks have been really handy; they have made walls watertight; they keep people warm; and they are used as partition walls when two or three families are sharing.” The blocks have been bought by Medair and then have been distributed free in the villages around Prizren.



6



Steve Mantle reports on a recent visit to Indonesia where he saw at first hand the preaching of the gospel alongside the distribution of relief supplies

With the fall of President Suharto in 1998, Indonesia has been wracked by violence, much of it of religious origin. Christians make up about ten per cent of Indonesia's 210 million people, but they live side by side with Muslims in thousands of towns across the islands that make up Indonesia.

BMS does not have missionaries sent out from the UK working in Indonesia, but it does support 14 Indonesian workers, mostly pastors and evangelists, all of whom think of themselves as BMS missionaries. BMS works in Indonesia through its partner, the Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia (KGBI).

In the pro-integration / pro-independence conflict of September 1999 in Timor, more than 200,000 people fled from East Timor to West Timor. Some went to the main town of Kupang to live with families. Others camped on spare ground in the town. The fact that this happened in the dry season compounded food and water shortages. Youbert Warouw, Director for the KGBI Department of Evangelism, said "There is not enough food, medicine or space for people, and as a result they are suffering disease."

Youbert then went on a fact-finding mission to see how the refugees were faring, and what their main needs were. As a result BMS sent a Relief Fund grant of £4,500 immediately, to distribute food and medicine to 6,500 families in the camps both in Kupang, and further afield.

In November Youbert set off with Youtie Legoh, the President of the KGBI, and Othniel Laoanak, a Baptist church planter. They worked together to survey the needs, and found different groups of refugees. After establishing which group to work with, they bought rice and instant noodles, which they took to the camp. As they went round the camp, they were escorted by troops, in case a riot broke out. The group of refugees they had chosen to work with was made up of Muslims and Christians from the Catholic and Reformed traditions. The conditions in the camp were terrible – there was no sanitation, and little water which meant diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and malaria were claiming already weak people as their victims. As well as sharing the material goods, they had such an enthusiasm for church planting and evangelism that they also preached the gospel, and more than 300 people made a commitment for Christ.

I then visited Indonesia in January/February this year. On my very first

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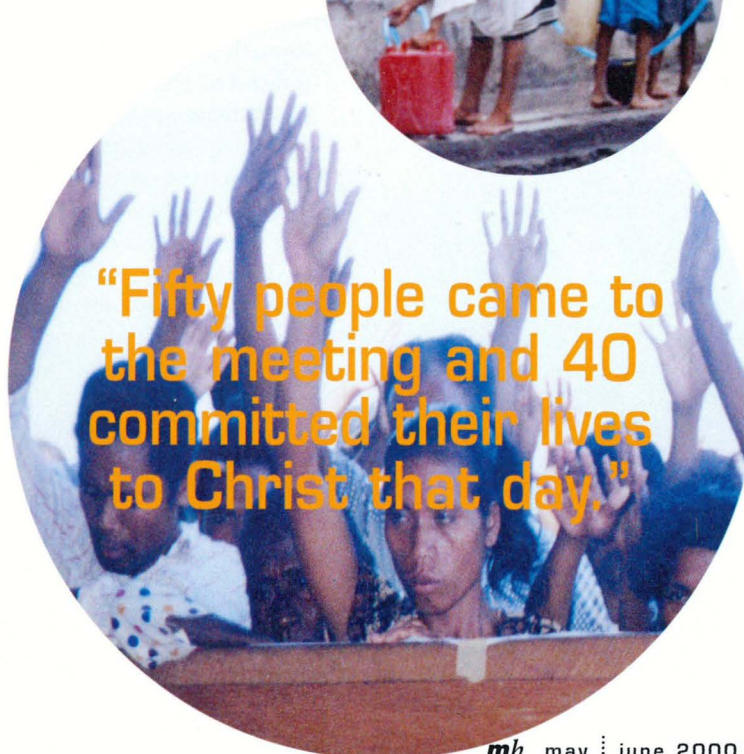
day I was aware of the mounting tension between Christians and Muslims, and there were frequent reports of Christians being attacked throughout the region. It seems that there is a deep hunger among Christians seeking God's help and support in this time of persecution. I visited one church on the island of Nias off the west coast of Sumatra – it took over 20 hours to get there along rough roads, plus an overnight ferry crossing. I don't think I've ever had so many near-death experiences in any one 20 hour period!

Fifty people came to the meeting and 40 committed their lives to Christ that day. Thirty wanted to go forward for baptism. The KGBI will offer discipleship training to the new converts, and they will not baptise them until they have been Christians for at least three months, and have shown their commitment to the Lord.

The need to work with the East Timorese refugees remains as great as ever. Estimates say as many as 125,000 refugees have now returned home, but for those who are left, they are living in overcrowded camps, with inadequate shelter, and fears of epidemics breaking out. The KGBI are now seeking to buy Bibles for the refugees, and with the money BMS had given, pastors who had lost their homes and churches are being helped.

On my way into Manado Youbert and Youtie took me to a KGBI church which had become home for two missionaries and their young families who had had to flee from the island of Ternate. They told me how their church was surrounded by stone throwing and machete-wielding Muslims intending to destroy the church and kill any one who got in the way. Angry scenes followed in which some Christians were hacked to death. The two families managed to escape, leaving on the very last ship bound for Sulawesi. They lost all their belongings. The island of Ternate had been 50/50 Christian/Muslim for generations, but now there are no Christians. They are either dead or have fled. Many KGBI staff believe it is the militant Muslim plan to rid each and every island across the archipelago of every trace of Christianity. ●

Steve Mantle is in-coming President of BMS



"Fifty people came to the meeting and 40 committed their lives to Christ that day."

Living on

Gwen Hunter describes what it's like when

■
It was early one Sunday morning when persistent knocking brought me to the door to find Lina and one of her daughters in a state of agitation. Lina's granddaughter was in the hospital outpatient department, ulcerous legs giving cause for concern. She was one of twins and the boy had died two days before, with malnutrition and associated anaemia.

The family had a debt to the hospital, money had finished, the surviving twin needed treatment and they couldn't afford medicines or food. Father had gone further east to contact friends for help. He didn't return alive and the second twin also died, despite the help we gave. Only the mother was left to mourn the loss of all her immediate family, together with her mother and sister. I was surprised to learn that Ngida had married and gone with her husband to live in Congo Brazzaville where they had settled well and were becoming relatively prosperous until the war broke out and they had to flee along with thousands of others.

Fighting broke out again between the government militia and the rebel groups more than a year ago in Congo Brazzaville. There have been massive and violent atrocities against the civilian population in an attempt to wipe out whole communities with arbitrary executions, mutilation and rape being performed on a wide scale.

First the Brazzaville population fled to the south to seek refuge in the tropical forests, but they found themselves, together with the local population, victims of indiscriminate violence. They had no access to food or medical care and fleeing in ever-greater numbers further south and west they crossed the borders in their thousands into the Bas Congo region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (or DRC, formerly Zaire). They preferred to stay near to the borders but it was difficult to get help to them in some of the remoter parts and the DRC government wanted to avoid the security hazard with Congo Brazzaville militia crossing the borders. Consequently they moved on down to the river at Luozi (the head town of the Manianga area). UNHCR officials came in with food and supplies and set up camps but soon found that they couldn't cope with such large numbers.

Thousands of refugees flooded into Mbanza Ngungu and others, passing through Luozi, poured down into Kimpese. At the same time



a knife-edge

refugees pour into your country



"The local Congolese couldn't find anything to buy because the refugees needed to eat as well."

the simmering war in Angola boiled up again. The UNITA rebels gained ground and moved towards the north of Angola causing tens of thousands to flee similar atrocities and pour north into Bas Congo (DRC). Many of those fleeing from Angola this time have fled before. For them, life seems a vicious circle of fleeing, settling in temporary accommodation, returning, planting, and often before a full harvest can be gathered, fleeing again leaving their fields to be flattened and their houses looted. They live on a knife-edge. Insecurity is a way of life. Poverty and malnutrition are normal. Yet they survive as a people though many individuals are lost.

So it was that once again Bas Congo (DRC) became home for probably at least 150,000 refugees fleeing from war to its north and south. The people of Bas Congo are in a critical period. The land which has been grossly over-farmed can just about support the local population, many of whom live at or below subsistence level and now there was an influx of hungry mouths to feed. In Luozi the market became a meagre affair. The local Congolese couldn't find anything to buy because the refugees needed to eat as well. Many refugees were sick. The hospitals filled up with needy souls who couldn't afford to pay. Aid organisations such as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders have come in with some help but fleeing takes its toll. A diabetic pastor fled from Congo Brazzaville, his insulin was running out, he couldn't exist without it; frantic radiophone messages were sent. The medicine was only to be found in Kinshasa and that was several days away and with no regular or sure way guaranteed.

The Church is called upon to show the love of God. To give away what it needs for itself – not out of its abundance but out of its poverty. Our Congolese have given themselves to help these refugees. In fact over the border in Congo Brazzaville our Congolese have often been badly treated in the past and many of the refugees have remarked on the warmth and love they have felt in the way they've been received by the people in Luozi. They came in fear, fleeing from violence, suffering, insecurity and pain and they were received with compassion. Man's inhumanity to man causes refugees. Only God's love between peoples can bring about reconciliation. Oh that God would bring peace – real peace – to Angola and Congo (both Congos) so that the refugees can return in security to their homelands and build for a good tomorrow. ●

Gwen Hunter is a pharmacist and BMS missionary, currently on her final Home Assignment in the UK after working in Zaire/Congo with BMS for over 30 years.



"GETTING THE WAR OUT"



A report on life in Chechnya – and beyond

It is said that since the Soviet Union crumbled in 1991, Chechnya has become one of the most dangerous places on earth – especially for Christians. Chechnya declared its independence in 1991, a claim Russia has never fully recognised. In 1996 Russia granted Chechnya limited political autonomy after another war ended there, but tensions rose again in August 1999 when Chechen militants seized control of the Russian republic, Dagestan. In September 1999, following bombings in Moscow, Russia invaded Chechnya in what it called a 'terrorist-fighting operation'.

It is believed that around 40 Christians remain in this breakaway, predominantly Muslim republic. The other Christians fled to adjoining regions, along with their mainly Muslim neighbours – more than 250,000 people altogether.

Among those who wanted to stay was Alexis Sitnikov, pastor of the Baptist church in Grozny, Chechnya.

He had been kidnapped twice, and his ribs had been broken before being kidnapped again by Muslim extremists in October 1998. His family continue to pray for him regularly, but hope is diminishing. In March 1999, the next pastor, Alexander Kulokov was kidnapped. Two weeks later a church member saw his severed head displayed at a market stall in Grozny. His successor, a 23-year-old deacon, Vitaly Korotun, was abducted in August 1999.

Recently a 13 year-old girl from Grozny Baptist church, Anya Hrykin, was found by Russian soldiers after being held for three months by Muslim extremists who beat, raped and starved her. She is now recovering in the care of another refugee family.

What of those who fled? Some escaped to Ingushetia, Northern Ossetia and Dagestan in the former Soviet Union. Thousands made the dangerous trek over icy mountain roads of the Caucasus mountain range into Georgia. Ingushetia received more than 230,000 refugees and has found it hard to cope. Most live with host families, or rent accommodation, but

"20,000 or so people live in tents, railway carriages, buses or hastily built shacks."

above: children's paintings from Chechnya and Georgia



20,000 or so people live in tents, railway carriages, buses or hastily built shacks. It was to this region of Ingushetia that BMS sent a Relief Fund grant of £3,000 in November 1999, to help provide food, clothing and blankets to around 2,000 people who had fled their homes.

Those in Georgia are with families or in camps. Traditionally the two countries of Chechnya and Georgia have been enemies. The dilemma for Georgian Christians has been how to respond to the plight of their mainly Muslim, Chechen neighbours.

One group of Georgian Baptists led by Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili, President of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches of Georgia decided to offer food, clothing, school books and other materials, and to spend Christmas with the refugees in their camp. Bishop Malkhaz said, "I am getting more and more convinced that the care of the children and the most destitute has to remain on our priority list. These children and refugees have been brought out of the war, but it is going to be very hard to get the war out of them." ●



Too close to home?

More than 100 passengers on the Boeing 727 that was hijacked back in February asked for asylum in Britain. Escaping the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, they came to Britain seeking a new life in a free society, free of persecution. Last year almost 90,000 people sought refuge in Britain, representing a 50 per cent increase on previous figures and making Britain the second most popular place to flee to, behind Germany. According to latest figures, genuine asylum seekers are outnumbered three to one by people simply looking for a better life in Britain.

The bottom line is that there are huge masses of humanity desperate to find a home. We can shout about social justice, fair play and humanitarian aid when they are out there. But when some of them arrive on our own doorstep we shout other words like: "Having let refugees from war-torn Kosovo in, we should kick the ungrateful parasites straight back out again!" (Daily Star). "All manner of Riff Raff are now coming to Britain, because we're the softest touch in Europe!" (Sunday Mirror). "The refugees are mainly Nigerians, Turks, Indians, Somalis and former Yugoslavs. Few of these countries feature persecution on a scale to justify the influx." (Mail on Sunday). According to the Refugee Council of Great Britain many genuine refugees who have come here to escape persecution, torture, ethnic cleansing and death are facing discrimination, verbal abuse and physical attacks. They are coldly referred to as "economic migrants" or "benefit scroungers".

The horror of being uprooted from your home and having to run for your life is not an experience that many of us will ever have. We glibly say that 'home is where the family is', so perhaps we should live with our family in a home-made shelter for a couple of years with a plastic bag as our toilet and an old spoon to help us dig in the dirt for food!

Fair dealing, compassion and integrity are the bedrock of Christian response in a hurting world. We can't turn our back on the people issues that plague our planet. Holding people at a distance, however complex the issues are, will never work. They will always be close to home! ●

Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions



for more than 50 years a forgotten war has raged in a former British colony. A gentle, hospitable people whose lands straddle the border of Thailand and Burma have been campaigning and fighting for autonomy. The Karen, one of the so-called hill tribe groups of this area, have lived in these lands for generations and were promised by the British a measure of independence when colonial rule ended; an independence that has been denied them ever since.

Earlier this year, this war hit the UK headlines because a band of soldiers, reputedly led by 12-year old twins, stormed a hospital on the Thai side of the border at Ratchaburi, took hostages and were eventually defeated by Thai troops. *God's Army* – as this group of fighters is known – took its desperate action in a bid to stop the Thai army co-operating with Burmese troops in the latter's long-running efforts to stamp out Karen resistance to its rule. But the outcome of its action is likely to make life in the hill tribe areas harder for everyone.

Already members of the Karen and Mon tribes face discrimination and difficulty in their daily lives because of their ethnic identity in both Burma and Thailand. The situation is far worse on the Burmese side of the border, especially for the Karen. There a war has been waged against them that, if it were happening in Bosnia or Kosovo, would have been labelled ethnic cleansing by Nato and precipitated action to stop it.

Karen villages are razed, their inhabitants forced to flee into the forest and find refuge where they may. Of those who are not killed – and many hundreds have been – many find sanctuary in camps on the Thai side of the border.

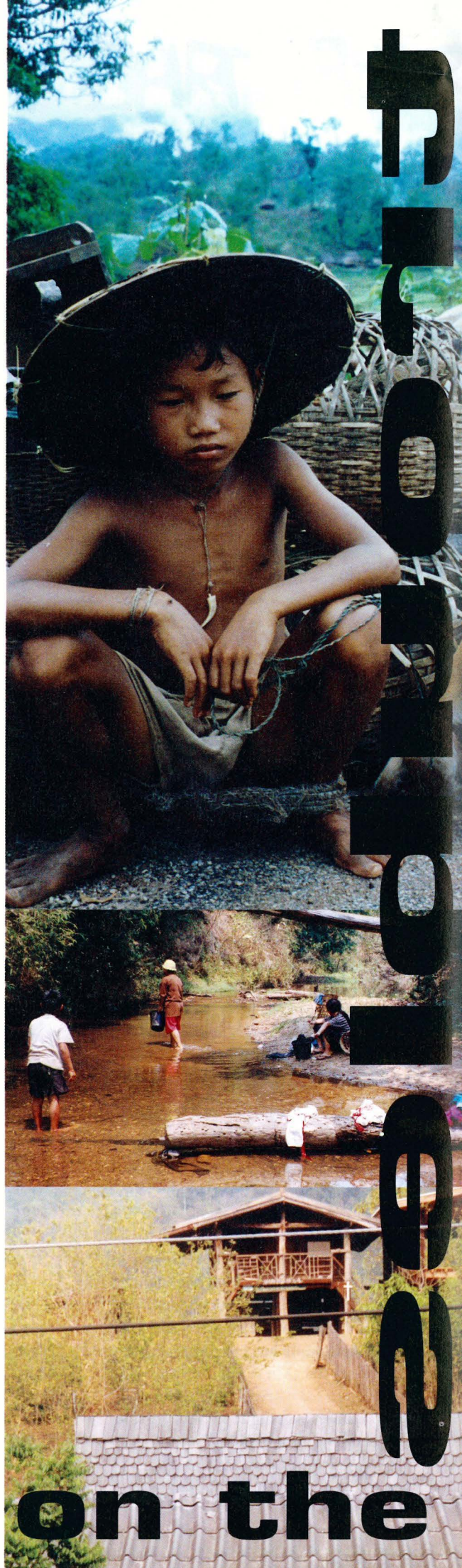
In the area around Sangklaburi, where BMS workers Angus and Carol MacNeill were working until late last year, there were two such camps. One was home to about 3,000 Karen, the other to 5,000 Mon. These camps, like the others dotted along the hundreds of miles of border between the two countries, are overseen by various non-governmental organisations, including The Burma Border Consortium, which BMS has supported through the Relief Fund.

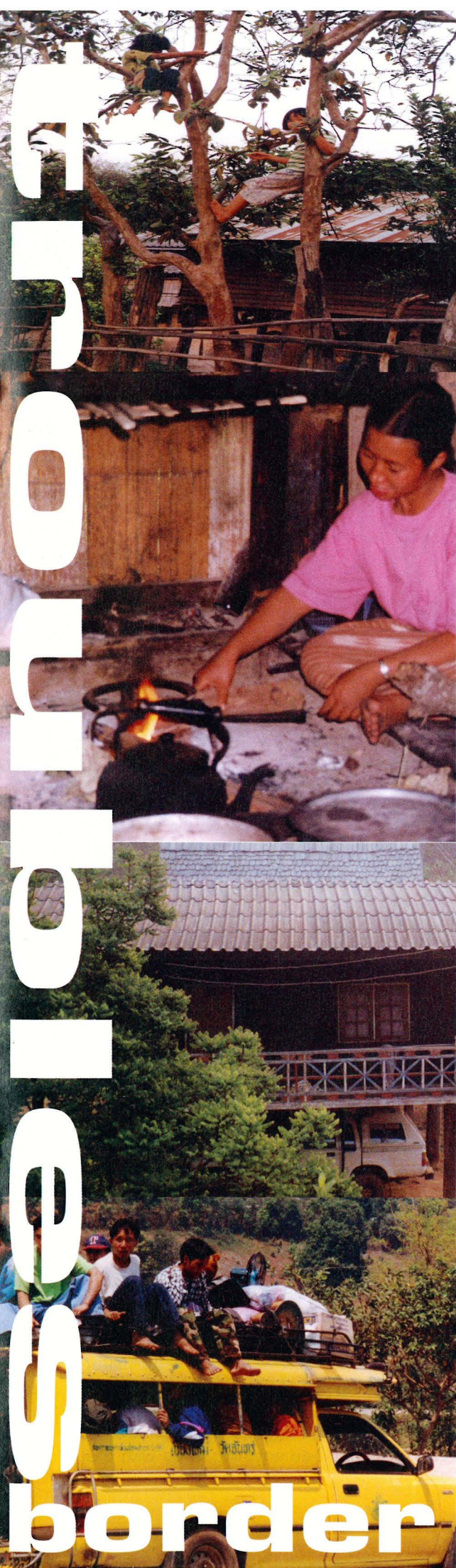
Angus and Carol talk movingly about the complexity that the camps bring to everyone's life in the area. "The 'walls' of the camps seemed to be quite porous, with camp residents moving in and out both officially with a permit or quite unofficially," they say. "We had contact with a girl who didn't have an identity card of any kind and who had been living in one of the camps. She'd left the camp and was working locally – illegally, of course, and so at a low rate of pay.

"One day she went back to the camp because there was a head count of some kind," they continue. "She resumed the life of a camp refugee – no work to do, but food supplied and freedom from hassle by the authorities."

Her story is typical of what appears to be happening all the way along the border. Thousands of people live in the shadow world of uncertainty – technically stateless but contributing to the bottom end of the Thai economy, living in a twilight world of exploitation and discrimination that affects not just 'refugees' but also indigenous hill tribe people.

The raid on Ratchaburi forced the issue into the Thai headlines.





Examining what was happening in the north of her country, Bangkok Post assistant editor, Sanitsuda Ekachai commented: "Deforestation. Drug trafficking. The influx of illegal labour. A new wave of communicable diseases. A rise in crime. And now terrorism. These national security problems are the end product of military oppression in Burma. Yet we blame the lambs instead of the wolves."

She was voicing the concern of some in Thailand that the military is siding with the Burmese army to force a resolution of the Karen question that will stop the migration of people and the disruption of the Thai hill tribe areas. She continued: "Millions of refugees from war and poverty have fled across the border in search of safety and hope, even though many end up living a dog's life in Thailand's sweatshops and brothels."

Astutely she points out that "like it or not, the influx of foreign labour, new diseases and terrorism are the other side of the

"Millions of refugees from war and poverty have fled across the border in search of safety and hope, even though many end up living a dog's life in Thailand's sweatshops and brothels."

globalisation coin."

Back in the hill tribe areas, countless refugees live outside the camps. Their lives are perilously uncertain but they have chosen work over life in overcrowded and highly regulated camps. But their uncertainty wasn't that much greater than many long-term hill tribe residents. As Angus and Carol remind us "many of these still do not have Thai citizenship. Although not looked upon by the authorities as refugees – they did have Hill Tribe Cards allowing them to live and work in a certain locality – their rights were limited. What the authorities were really saying was that they could not be sure that these people could stay in Thailand forever."

The shoot-out at Ratchaburi seems likely to make life for these people harder as the Thai authorities take a harsher line on 'terrorists' using their country as a base for their armed campaign against a neighbour with whom Thailand is building a lucrative economic partnership.

Maybe Sanitsuda Ekachai is right when she says: "Only when justice and equity prevail domestically and internationally, will the oppressed not need to use violence to fight back." ●

Simon Jones is BMS Co-ordinator for London and South East England

Toulouse

A series edited
by **Jan Kendall**
that looks at
towns and cities
around the
world where
BMS personnel
are working
By **Robert
Atkins,
Katie Bates,
& Bethan
Jones**



Introduction

Toulouse is a cosmopolitan city of 700,000 inhabitants, only three hours' drive away from Barcelona. In fact 30 per cent of the population have some links with Spain. Toulouse also welcomed a large number of French refugees from the Algerian conflict in the 50s and 60s – the so-called 'pieds noirs' – blackfeet. The British and German embassies reckon that there are 3,000 each of British and German people here but some estimates go as high as 6,000 each. Most of them live to the west of Toulouse around the airport at Blagnac. There is an Anglican Church as well as a fish and chip shop in Pibrac. In the city centre, Irish pubs abound. Social

commentators have already noticed that St Patrick's Day is becoming an important international festival!

Toulouse is universally known as 'la ville rose' – the pink city. Everything of any age, including medieval cathedrals and Roman remains, is built out of red brick. The effects of light on the brick are quite arresting. The saying goes - 'the town is pink in the morning, red in the midday sun and mauve at dusk.'

Toulouse is France's fourth largest city. It is also the space and aviation capital of Europe, and the number one city in France for electronics, robotics and leather and seed industries.

History

Toulouse existed as a settlement by a ford of the River Garonne before the Romans came to France. The site became a huge Roman city – the third largest city in Gaul. In the fifth century, it was the Visigoth's capital. From the ninth to the 13th centuries Toulouse was the seat of one of the most beautiful courts of Europe.

The Spanish Inquisition was invented in Toulouse. Saint Dominic was upset by the progress of the Albigensian heresy (also known as Catharism) which taught that the material world had been created by a bad god, whereas only the spiritual, invisible world had anything to do with the



Above: Le Capitole

Below: Aerial view of Le Capitole



good God. Dominic founded the Dominican Order with Catharism in mind, and opened the first community at Toulouse in 1216. But Cathar doctrines struck at the root of Catholicism and the French political institutions so church and state, backed by the king (Louis VIII), formed the Roman Catholic crusade against the heresy. This area was added to the territory of the French crown in 1271. The University was founded by the Inquisition to propagate 'orthodoxy'.

1814 saw the battle of Toulouse. Wellington's soldiers beat the French, unaware that the war had already ended and that Napoleon was no longer on the throne. Shortly after, Napoleon returned for the 'thousand days' and Waterloo.

After the revolution in France the city became rather sleepy and missed the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century; it only began to grow again after the First World War.

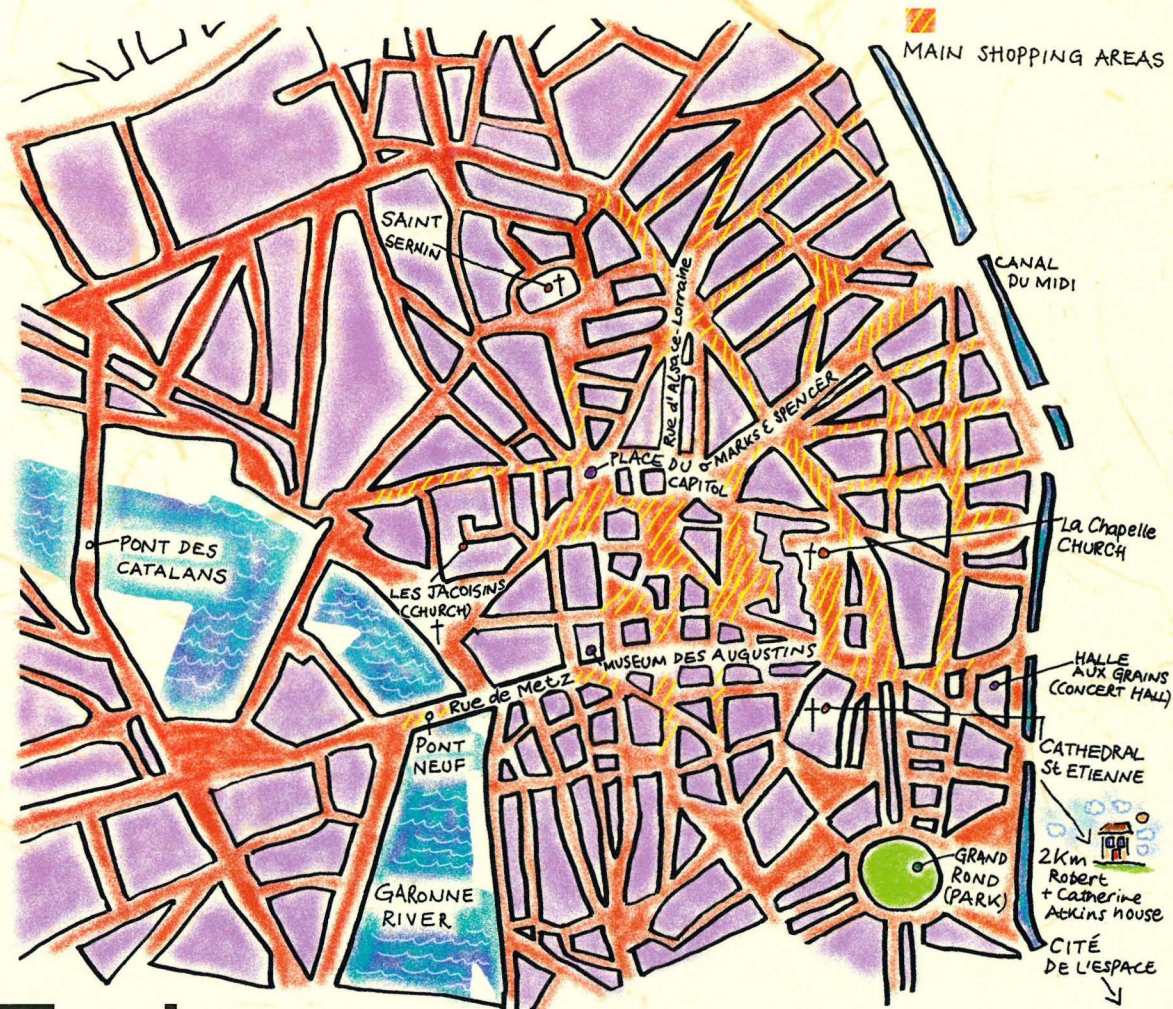
First Impressions

Toulouse is a bustling university city that welcomes people from all countries and cultures. Its snug streets and picturesque environment make this highly populated city seem cosy and intimate. Despite being thoroughly French, it boasts a uniqueness of architecture that has very mediterranean tendencies while its friendly inhabitants are far from the coldness of Parisian busyness, pertaining more to the Spanish warmth of character.

Toulouse is a very cultured city. There are a number of museums and cathedrals to visit. St Sernin,

St Etienne, St Augustin and the Basilica, all of which are impressive. There are also a number of theatres and two cinemas in the vicinity.

Toulouse has a big city philosophy, always very busy and never any room to move. However, you must remember that in general the French will not move to let you pass, but will keep to their path. It is really up to you to move! But pavements are for everyone aren't they? Toulousians on the whole are very proud and will not be defeated. At first this is frustrating but you get used to it.



Toulouse

Homelessness

There are plenty of homeless people in Toulouse. Sharing the streets of its cosy, clean apparent wealth are many people who are far from any of these things. Homeless because of circumstances, whether inflicted upon them or otherwise, many of these people live in a society all of their own where the order of their day is decided by how much money they can get begging, and where they can get their next meal.

Transport

Toulouse is in the forefront of aircraft technology - Concorde was made here and Airbus is a big employer. Much of the work for the Ariane European space programme is done here and a space museum opened in 1997 which is now a major tourist

attraction in the South West of France.

It is possible to travel by boat from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean thanks to the 'Canal du Midi' which was opened in 1680 and is now classed as an ancient monument. The architect was Pierre-Paul Riquet. His statue has its back to the canal because it was diverted.

There is also an underground railway which has no driver.

Leisure Activities

Toulouse is the rugby football capital of France. The local team provides a good number of members of the French national squad and was champion in 1994, 95, 96, 97 and 99.

The Christian Scene

There have been Christians in Toulouse since at least 250AD.

This was when the first bishop of Toulouse, called St Saturnin, was martyred by being dragged by a bull down what is still called 'la Rue du Taur' - Bull Street. His remains are housed in the biggest church of its kind in the world. It was built in the 11th century to welcome the very numerous pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. It also has the largest collection of relics in France - Calvin (a reformer from the 16th century) wrote a witty treatise ridiculing them.

Nowadays, there are more than 40 Protestant places of worship - many of them short-lived, hard to find, ethnic set-ups. The church scene is very fragmented indeed. Apart from the historic and traditional Eglise Réformée, the strongest protestant churches are the Pentecostal ones which have recently celebrated 50 years in



Left: Halle aux Grains
(concert hall)

Below: Cloister in museum des Augustins



Toulouse, but are themselves divided. Protestant churches here tend to be international – much of their strength coming from French West-Indian and French-speaking African Christians. Every two years there is a 'Fête de la Bible' which aims to gather the largest possible number of evangelical Christians for a shared service. There are usually as many as 700 to 800 at this.

Profile

Pierre Bordas (not his real name) spent 15 years in prison for *grand banditisme* – loosely translatable



as total mayhem linked to armed robbery. Once, when he and his accomplices were searching for a hiding place for their loot, they came across a hermit in a cave. This man, who had obviously never met Pierre before turned to Pierre and said, 'Pierre, m'aimes-tu?' That shook him but he didn't change his lifestyle straight away.

In fact, it took nearly twenty years and that long prison sentence before Pierre was finally able to say 'Yes, Lord: you know that I love you.' A video featuring Nicky Cruz was an important factor in his conversion.

Now, Pierre has been disowned by all of his former friends. When some of his old associates came to visit him recently one of them said, 'No, I've come to the wrong

flat! Pierre doesn't live here!' He must have seen the cross, the Christian posters . . .

Pierre is a volunteer who works at the church's homeless people's breakfasts on Mondays. He jokes that he can't come on a Tuesday because he's holding up a bank! He's talking about the 'banque alimentaire' – the bank of foodstuffs where organisations can go to get food parcels for those in need. He does this for the Salvation Army where he also helps out. In fact, Pierre is soon to become a Salvation Army soldier. He says, 'Once, I used to shoot at people in uniform - now I'm going to be wearing one myself!'

The BMS in Toulouse

BMS personnel Robert and Catherine Atkins have been working in Toulouse since 1995. La Chapelle, the church with which they work, and the only evangelical church in the city centre, offer homeless breakfasts to people in the hope that they can not only offer them the temporary necessity of food, but also the more permanent provision of accommodation. They hope that through these acts of help in the church they can get them closer to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Although realistically they can only expect to give food, an open-house Bible discussion is also held after every homeless breakfast for the very real spiritual need. ●

God is faithful

Katie Bates is a Bristol university student studying for a degree in French and Italian. She recently came to the end of a six-month placement working alongside BMS missionaries Robert and Catherine Atkins in Toulouse, France.



I re-read my first prayer letter recently and realised just how faithful God has been to me over these past few months; experience has been plentiful and I am certain I have grown in many ways. I really enjoyed encountering such a wide spectrum of people, from the homeless to those at the top of the French social ladder. I have really felt blessed by all the friends that I now have in Toulouse.

Anyone working with an inner-city church will know that the people and situations that arise can be difficult; working with the church of La Chapelle I have witnessed a fair few of them. I've found the breakfasts for the homeless a real experience. They are held in the church kitchen and there is generally a very comfortable and friendly atmosphere. My job, and that of all the

workers there, was to simply encourage this atmosphere in the hope that we might be a kind of silent witness for Christ. After each breakfast there is a Bible study, to which all are invited. The length and depth of the discussions that took place more recently have been a real encouragement.

For someone who had little contact with children before, I was thoroughly surrounded by them in Toulouse. Living with a family which included seven, 11, 15 and 17-year-old children, taking Sunday School once a month, helping teach English to ten to 11 year-olds and spending a lot of time with the minister's three children, I am now a confirmed lover of kids! Although it could be a little manic, I am very glad I lived with a French family. It has been a real advantage with regards to learning about French culture and language. ●

"I re-read my first prayer letter recently and realised just how faithful God has been to me over these past few months;"

WHO?

WHEN?

WHAT?

WHERE?



Volunteers in Prague, Summer 1999. Rob Vaines, Marc Vandle, Jo Oldfield, Kurt Yandle

Summer

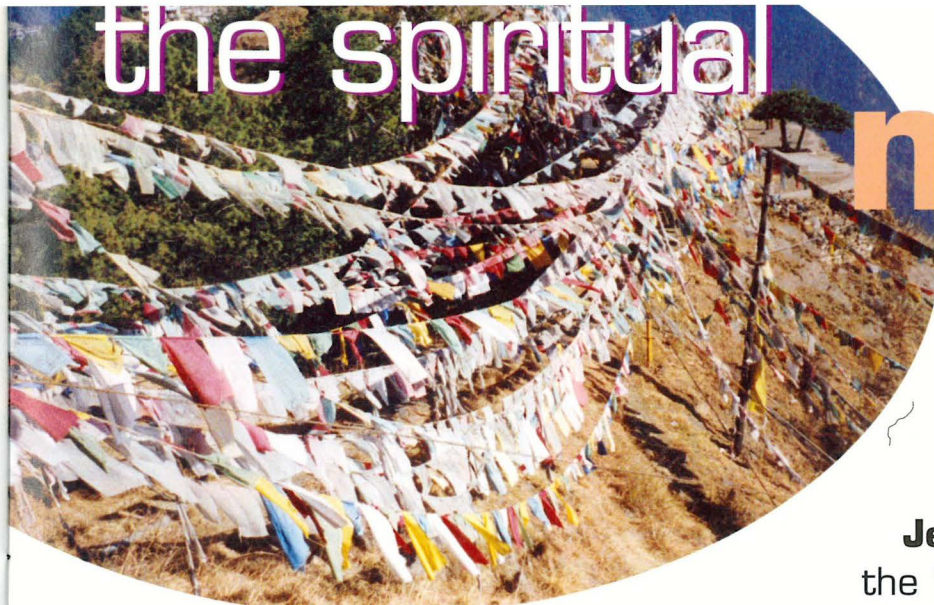
What will you be doing? You could be on a BMS...

BRAZIL

Location: São Paulo
Dates: 15 July -
Team: 10 - 12 n
Assignment: Working
Cost: £1,050

If you are over 18, if y
SELECTION: Selection
prepare you for your e
Centre, Birmingham
For more details and an appl

the spiritual mosaic of India



Tibetan Prayer Flags up a mountain pass in Shimla, Himalayas

Jenny Lunn explains
the images she saw in India

It has been said that Hinduism is the very thing that defines India and indeed, I have seen a religion that penetrates the whole of life; society, politics, and culture. Hinduism is incredibly complex and in theory, is destroyed by any attempt at description or classification. It is both a public affair and a private religion.

All the large temples dedicated to different gods are matched by small shrines in every family home for their favourite deity. Shrines are found everywhere and anywhere. A gaudy plastic image of Ganesh – the elephant god – with flashing lights, sits on the dashboard of a taxi (the good fortune of a god is certainly needed amid the chaos and danger of Indian roads!) Incense burns beneath Shiva's picture in a shop, infusing every product with its odour. A stall selling garlands of orange flowers is found next to a street shrine, where passing devotees take a

moment from their journey to worship Durga, temporarily blocking the pavement.

What of the Christians? I have met some enthusiastic churches, growing youth groups, envisioned congregations and courageous and committed individuals standing up for Christ in India. Also, countless organisations are working hard for the poor, oppressed, destitute and marginalised, and campaigning for social justice and equality. Being a Christian is by no means a carefree lifestyle. It was the first time I had ever been to an ordinary church which had a dozen security guards with guns guarding the gates and fences.

What image do I take away from India? One of huge religious diversity, but not one of peace and harmony. I will remember the buzz of Pune Old Town at Eid as the Muslims celebrated the end of Ramadan. The young peach-robed Hare Krishna devotees stopping

me in the shopping arcades of Delhi. The sign boards at rural railway stations which I presumed to be 'Do not leave baggage unattended' messages but turned out to be deep philosophical Hindu thoughts to challenge the waiting traveller. The peace and tranquility of the Bahai temple where people of all faiths are welcome to meditate and worship in unity and harmony. Two village panchayats (local leaders) in rural West Bengal – the first time women, and Christian women at that, had been elected. The exposure to such a spiritual mosaic has certainly challenged me to think about issues of tolerance, love for your enemies, the place of politics in religion (and vice versa), unity, forgiveness and the supremacy of Jesus Christ. ●

Jenny Lunn is a member of the 1999/2000 India Action Team, and comes from King Street Baptist Church, Oldham

Teams 2000

this summer?
Summer Action Team in...

12 August
members
alongside BMS missionaries in favela slums

PRAGUE

Location: Prague

Dates: 8 July - 29 July

Team: 6 - 10 members

Assignment: Hands-on opportunities for service, including various practical projects at the International Baptist Theological Seminary and supporting the Seminary in its work

Cost: £500

You have a few weeks to spare this summer, and if a challenge is what you want, then here's what to do: day is 3 June – a chance for us to meet you plus an informal interview. **TRAINING:** 30 June - 2 July to fully experience. **DEBRIEF:** 25-27 August. Both Selection and Training will take place at BMS International Mission

Main countries for the world's internally displaced people

Sudan	4,000,000	
Angola	1,000,000 - 1,500,000	
Colombia	1,400,000	
Iraq	1,000,000	More than 1,000,000
Afghanistan	540,000 - 1,000,000	
Myanmar	500,000 - 1,000,000	
Turkey	400,000 - 1,000,000	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	840,000	
Azerbaijan	576,000	
Sri Lanka	560,000	
Russian Federation	550,000*	
India	520,000	
Burundi	500,000	
Rwanda	500,000	500,000 - 1,000,000
Lebanon	400,000 - 450,000	
Uganda	400,000	
Peru	340,000	
Dem Rep of Congo	300,000*	
Sierra Leone	300,000*	
Georgia	280,000	200,000 - 500,000

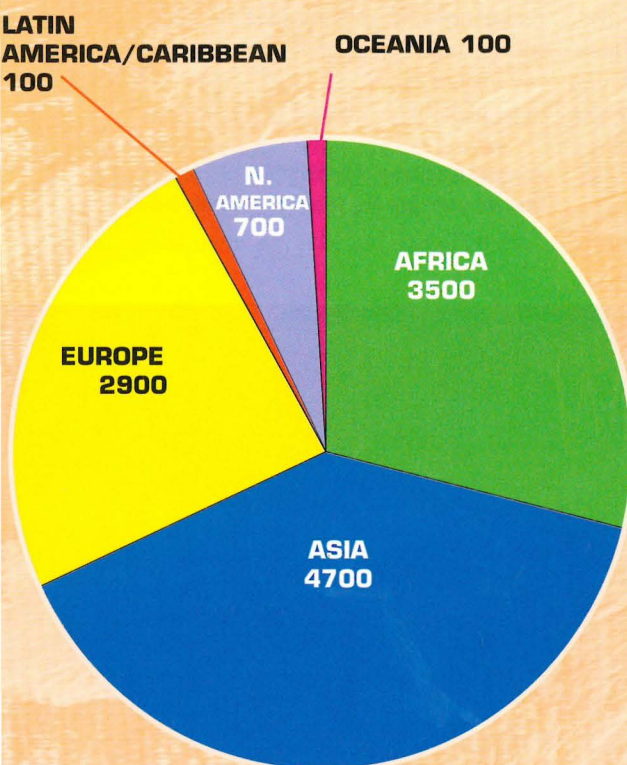
*Reliable estimate unavailable

(New Internationalist)

"The dogs ate the dead,
the living ate the dogs"

A description of life in the Angolan town of Kuito,
as the civil war continues in that country.

Global refugee population in the world (end of 1997) (000's)



Refugees

Facts

- One in every 255 people on the planet is a refugee.
- The majority of refugees are women and children.
- 85% of refugees are in countries of the Majority World, that is those who can least afford to welcome them are the most generous in doing so.
- There are an estimated 22 million refugees in the world today (though figures vary considerably) plus at least 30 million people displaced within their own countries.
- Some African countries have simultaneous inflows and outflows of refugees. The same people may cross and re-cross the same border repeatedly, fleeing successively from different versions of repression or conflict.
- Asia is host to the largest number of refugees, more than 5 million of whom are Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

(New Internationalist, Third World Atlas)

Meditation

- Leader:** The Lord is the way of the lost
- People:** The Lord is the staff of the lame
- Leader:** The Lord is the guide of the blind
- People:** The Lord is the strength of the weak
- Leader:** The Lord is the hope of holiness
- People:** The Lord is freedom of the slaves
- Leader:** The Lord is the consolation of those in bonded labour
- People:** The Lord is the spring for those who seek the water of life
- Leader:** The Lord is the comfort of orphans and widows

Confession of sin

- Leader:** Let us confess our sins unto Almighty God. Almighty God, our Lord and redeemer, we confess that we have sinned against you and against our fellow men.
- People:** God forgive and help us.
- Leader:** We confess that we have seen the ill-treatment of others, and have not gone to their aid. Father forgive. We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, nor our neighbours as ourselves. Father forgive.
- People:** God forgive and help us.
- Silence**
- Leader:** Almighty God who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins through the incarnate Word. Amen.

Taken from a service of prayer, repentance and reconciliation held in Georgia with Chechen refugees and Muslim leaders present. The service was led by Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili, President of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist churches of Georgia.



Chechnyan Refugees

Welcoming the stranger

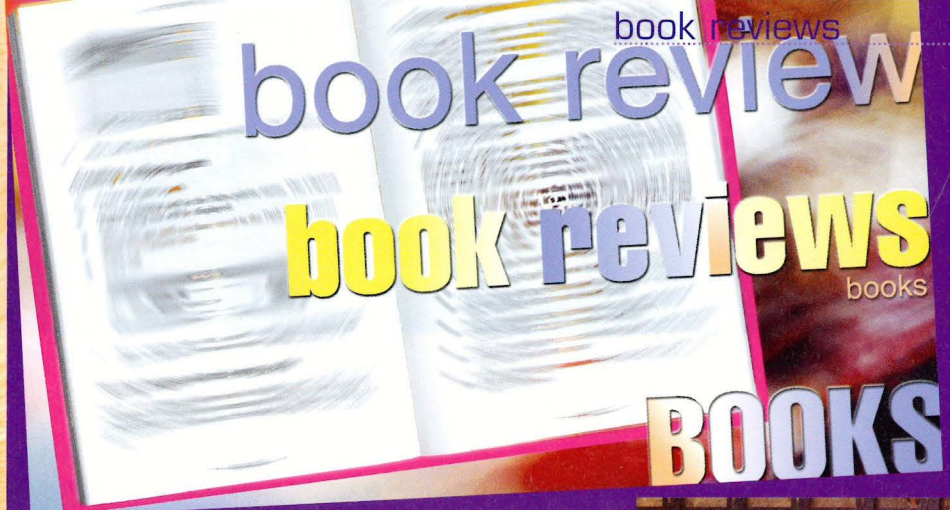


Thousands of refugees are on the move

around the world.. What happens if they turn up on our doorstep? The new Asylum and immigration Act could mean that refugees will – perhaps for the first time – come to your church looking for help. How will you respond?

Welcoming the Stranger is a practical guide and study pack on this crucial issue produced jointly by the BMS and BUGB. It contains a summary of the new legislation, a guide to setting up a project to help refugees, stories from around the world about how the BMS is involved with displaced people and theological reflections.

Priced £3, it is available from Rob Vaines on 01235-517617



Book Title: What is mission?
Theological Explorations
Author: Andrew Kirk
Publisher: Darton Longman Todd
(ISBN 0-222-52326-6)
Reviewer: Simon Jones, BMS
co-ordinator for London
& the South East
No of pages: 302
Price: £12.99

There is no shortage of mission primers for undergraduates and ministers wanting to refresh their thinking in this area. But new ones are needed in each generation because while the subject matter stays pretty much the same, the questions we ask about the world and mission change.

This work, by the Dean of the School of Mission and World Christianity at Selly Oak College in Birmingham, is the fruit of a life spent in mission and mission education. Kirk served in South America in the 1970s, came home and wrote the first evangelical theology to seriously engage with the new liberation theologies emerging in the wake of the Medellin and Bogotá Conferences of 1970 and 71 respectively.

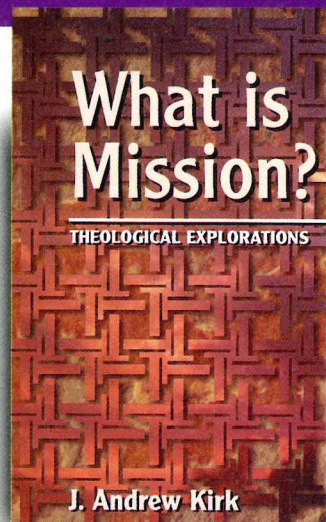
Kirk opened the eyes of many evangelicals to the need to engage with the political and economic realities of the situations they were serving in – whether at home or overseas. He has since gone on to write about the nature of the Kingdom of God and to explore understandings of freedom in contemporary society and the world's religions.

So this book is informed by both practice and reflection, settled ministry and considerable travel around the world. And it shows. Kirk is widely read and is able to bring the fruit of that reading to a range of vital mission topics such as justice for the poor, violence, the encounter with the world's religions, the environment, partnership and engagement with culture.

Each of these topics is tackled with insight under the heading of contemporary issues in mission. It is preceded by reflection on introductory questions such as the purpose of theology and what contemporary New Testament studies tell us about Jesus and his mission.

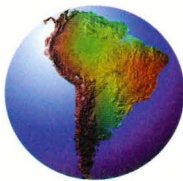
Kirk trenchantly defends the centrality of the church in mission, looking at but dismissing ideas that God's work can somehow be carried separately from the church. This leads him to conclude the book by looking at the role envisaged for the church by her Lord. He faces squarely the chequered history of the church and its need for repentance in the light of its many sins and he calls the church to be prophetic and evangelistic, endorsing the principle that there is no salvation outside the church.

This is really a book for pastors and theological students. But intelligent lay people would benefit from reading it. Perhaps the central section could form the basis for a home group series on mission in the contemporary world. It contains a lot that would stimulate discussion and debate, all the while helping us to focus our minds on the key need of the church today – that it rediscover its role in the world, viz making Jesus known.



prayer projects people

PROJECTS UPDATE



**Project: Easter Project
All aboard!
Target £30,000**

To help raise money for a new boat for Gerry Myhill in his ministry amongst the people living on the islands in the Bay of Paranaguá, and to help finance other ministries Gerry and Johan Myhill are involved in.

Gerry and Johan are BMS missionaries in Brazil. They were invited by their local Baptist Association in the state of Paraná, in the south of Brazil, to work amongst the people who live along the coast and on the numerous islands in the Bay of Paranaguá. Gerry pastors several Baptist churches on different islands in the bay, and is only able to get to these islands using a boat. Gerry's present boat is no longer seaworthy, and parts are not easily obtainable. So BMS plans to sell Gerry's boat and put the money towards a new one.

Money raised by All Aboard! will help pay for a new boat for Gerry and will help finance the other ministries Gerry and Johan are involved in from their base at Curitiba.

PRAYER FOCUS



Mark and Ruth Warner: Massy, France

The Warners are currently in the middle of a year of intensive language training based in Massy, on the outskirts of Paris, prior to beginning ministerial work in France. They describe this latest stage in God's service as "...a challenging new venture" but also say,



"...we know, without doubt, that God has called us to it." Last year a British newspaper ran a full-page article that stated "According to recent figures, there are more British missionaries operating in France than any other country in the world... France is now considered one of the world's most secular countries, with church attendance among the lowest in Europe." Mark and Ruth say, "This land desperately needs credible, vibrant churches established that will affect individuals and the nation to bring them back to God. God has big plans for this land. We hope to be playing our part in those plans."

Ruth has previously worked as a

teacher of British Sign Language and also interprets for deaf people at various Christian events. She would like the opportunity to learn and use French sign language whilst in France.

Please pray:

- p That Mark and Ruth's hearts will burn strongly for Jesus and for the French people**
- p That they will quickly pick up the language and begin building good friendships amongst those they live and work with**
- p That opportunities would open up for Ruth to work with the deaf in France**

Karen and Simon Collins: Luanda, Angola

Simon and Karen, a GP and teacher by profession, have been helping out with an encouraging evangelistic outreach by IEBA (Evangelical Baptist Church of Angola) in a deprived area on the outskirts of Luanda, Angola's capital city. Many women and children refugees live in this area and the first time the Collins visited, more than 50 children and 40 mothers came along to listen to Bible stories and sing simple choruses. Simon has begun a weekly clinic with the help of some nurses from the local church, as most of the people cannot afford medical treatment. Karen helps with the singing and story telling



in a junior church environment. The couple have begun attending a church called Combatentes which has 500 or more members. Most of the people in the church speak KiCongo but Karen has decided to continue concentrating on learning Portuguese at the moment, the main language spoken in Luanda. Communicating with people is not the only difficulty Simon and Karen face in Angola - in recent months they have had trouble with the water supply to their house, having to rely on two big barrels which they have managed to keep filled so far. They say, "Praying for the basics like water has been a humbling experience and we thank God that he has always helped us just as we were about to run out."

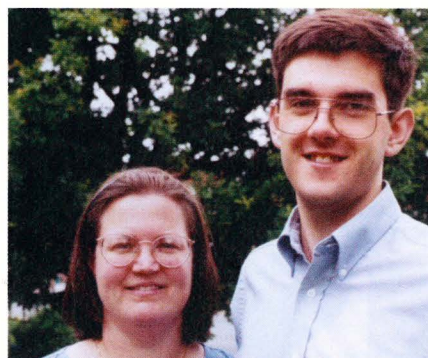
Please pray:

- 📌 For the effectiveness of this outreach in not only helping people practically, but in also drawing them closer to Christ
- 📌 For the problem of the water supply to the house to be quickly solved
- 📌 For a leap forward in Simon and Karen's Portuguese language skills enabling them to build better relationships and to feel more confident in all their dealings with students, patients and friends

**Geoff and Mary Ida Timms:
Tirana, Albania**

Like all long-term BMS missionaries, Geoff and Mary Ida have been undertaking a period of language and orientation training before commencing work in Albania.

Albanian is a very difficult language to learn but the Timms are making good progress. Mary Ida has



preached several times in Albanian from a written script and is working towards using just an outline. Geoff has been concentrating on building a good foundation in grammar and is now building up his general vocabulary. BMS is consulting with the Albanian Baptist Union regarding their future work but in the meantime, Mary Ida is offering pastoral support to the Albanian pastor of Freedom Baptist Church, and Geoff is undertaking research into the type of development projects that have been tried by Christian groups in Albania over recent years.

Please pray:

- 📌 For the building of good, sound relationships with nationals
- 📌 For God's clear guidance in the next stage of their ministry
- 📌 For continued good progress in language learning

**Georgie and Stuart Christine:
São Paulo, Brazil**

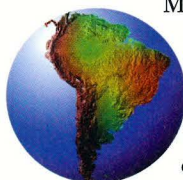
In 1992 Georgie Christine began a programme of pre-school education for five and six-year-olds in the favelas (shanty towns) of São Paulo, Brazil.

Many of you will have read in the Streets Ahead project how, without this opportunity for preparation, many of the children would enter the national schools programme

at seven years of age, finding themselves already far behind their more fortunate classmates and with every chance of dropping out and turning to a life of crime, drugs and prostitution. From one pre-school of 20 children, the idea has grown and developed and March saw the opening of the twentieth school in São Paulo and discussions taking place to expand the project to other Brazilian States, and possibly into Mozambique and India! Georgie and Stuart say, "Our Brazilian churches are full of folk who have dreamt about being a 'missionary' and have found in the favela pre-schools an opportunity to get on the front-line of mission."

Please pray:

- 📌 For the guidance of the Holy Spirit in what countries the project should be introduced and who should lead each new group
- 📌 Thank God for his abundant blessing on this project and pray for continued blessing on all that Georgie and Stuart do in Brazil



PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

BMS personnel introduce some friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day



Teofil and Katarina Deeta, Pula, Croatia

Teofil and Katarina have worked in the Croatian coastal town of Pula for one and a half years. Previously this university town had no Baptist church. The church has grown from scratch to a regular congregation of 20 baptised believers and 20 children. Teofil is now an accredited minister of the Baptist Union of Croatia, having previously completed a four-year theological degree at Osijek Evangelical Seminary in Croatia. He and Katarina are one of three people/couples who are wholly funded by a BMS partnership grant.

Photograph: Katarina and Teofil (right) with Georgio Grilj, the Baptist pastor of Rijeka Baptist Church, at his ordination on Sunday 30 January 2000.

From Reuben Martin, who has been with BMS in Croatia, for just over a year.

Sonia Franco, São Paulo, Brazil

Sonia first came into contact with the church in Jardim Olinda favela in São Paulo in the early 1990s. She says, "At that time my life was in a mess. Nothing seemed to make sense, and from a human point of view, there was no solution." The family were living in a wooden shack with never enough to eat; her husband was out of work, and frequently drinking too much.

In 1992 her son, Diego, had a bad infection. Although Sonia took him to the doctors, she did not have enough money to buy the medicine he needed. She was invited to church by her neighbour, so that Diego could be prayed for on the following Sunday. Stuart Christine was the speaker. He had a big wooden cross and handed round papers on which everyone had to write their sins against God. Then he explained Christ died paying the



penalty for all our sins. After the service Stuart prayed for Diego, and later that afternoon brought round the medicine he needed.

Sonia says, "From that time on my life gradually began to change!" Her husband got a regular job which he is still doing today, and she, too, got a job in the Education Support programme run by the Baptist Orphanage. Three years later her husband became a Christian, and in March 1998 she left the orphanage and joined the staff of ABIAH-OASIS, the organisation that works with Baptist churches and BMS in developing the pre-schools mission programme, as administrative secretary.

Sonia concluded, "My life has been completely restored. Today I have gained my self esteem. I love my work and I praise God for what he has done in my life and the life of my family!"

From Stuart & Georgie Christine, working with BMS in São Paulo, Brazil

People Wanted

Could this be you?

**Pastors
&
Church
Workers**

BMS is working in several countries where the national church is crying out for co-workers. From Eastern Europe to Bangladesh and Thailand, there is a need for committed pastors to undertake a variety of work including church planting, evangelism or teaching. Up to now you've always thought cross-cultural mission was for someone else - today, ask "is it me Lord?"

Medical Needs

Making Jesus known in the midst of great physical need is a situation where medical personnel can really make a difference. Overseas the needs are great and the workers are few. Whether you're a nurse or a doctor, a midwife or a pharmacist - is God asking you to leave your comfort zone?

Engineering

When the children in your village die of water-borne disease, you don't need to ask what contribution can an engineer make? In the hills of Nepal where there is no electricity, you don't need to look far to see the changes that engineers bring about. Go to a small town and see young girls learning to be welders, working in an organisation which is winning major contracts because of its skilled workforce - and see Christian engineers at work - you won't ask why they're there - you'll wonder why you're not with them!

Teaching

The international language of the world is English - and all over there are opportunities for people to teach English as a foreign language. The context is there for Christians to love these people, show them respect, allow them to see Christ in us... in you. Elsewhere, the delights of teaching missionary children, or local children in a national school. One thing for sure - there won't be an OFSTED inspection!

**Support
Ministries**

We all need the backing of others, and modern mission needs people to work in offices overseas, as administrators or accountants, as managers and logistics officers. One day you'll be welcoming people into the country, next day trying to clear a shipment of medicines. There won't be a predictable routine - that's a promise!

Hundreds more!

These are just examples of the long-term opportunities we have available, but the reality of mission today means that most skills can be used. The only "must" is a love for Christ and a desire to make him known. To contact us, please turn to page 35



New personnel

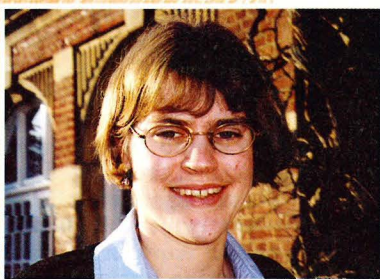
Alan & Megan Barker

Both members of Centenary Baptist Church, March, Alan is a Scheme Manager of Sheltered Accommodation and Megan is an Occupational Therapist. Both have contributed greatly to the life of their church, leading and helping out at various groups, including Alpha. Alan was also a leader, and Megan helped lead, in a 'church plant' from Maghull Baptist Church, Liverpool. They have three children aged 14, 13 and 11. Following a period of cross-cultural and biblical studies training they will work in Nepal with the United Mission to Nepal.



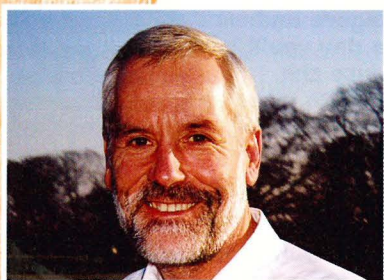
Susan Caddy

Susan is a nurse, and it is expected that she will work in Europe, possibly Albania. She has been a staff nurse on the gynaecology ward at Nottingham City Hospital since 1998. Originally from Southampton, Susan has led Crusader groups, and now is an executive member of the Christian Student Nurses Group in Nottingham. She is a member of Queensberry Street and Basford Road Baptist Church, Nottingham. Last summer Susan went to Albania as part of the emergency task force sent out by BMS in the wake of the crisis in Kosovo.



Graham Sansom

Graham has been minister at Wollaston Baptist Church, Wellingborough since 1988, and prior to that he was a school teacher. After a period of training in cross-cultural studies at IMC, Graham will serve with BMS as a minister in Albania.



Baptist House News

Welcome to Sylvia Penny

Sylvia comes to BMS Didcot having just spent ten years in America where she supported her husband who was pastor of a small, non-denominational church. Sylvia's background is in accounting, and she is now



working at BMS as Accounts Supervisor. In the States she enjoyed tap dancing and singing, but Sylvia says she hasn't time to indulge in these activities now she's working full-time!

BMS Relief Fund Grants

Bangladesh £9,000

This money has been given to an Emergency Rehabilitation Programme via the Social Health and Education Development (SHED) Board in Bangladesh to help alleviate suffering of tribal groups returning from India to their homeland in the Rangamati Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. These tribal groups took refuge in India in the 1970s but have been returning to settle in the Rangamati Hill Tracts since a peace agreement was signed in December 1998. Many of the returning families are finding that their traditional homestead land has been acquired by others, with very little shelter, food or work available.

Indonesia £5,000

(See feature page 12)

This money has been given to the KGBI (the Convention of Indonesian Baptist churches) to help provide food, medicine and shelter for those affected by the violence and riots against Christians in Halmahera, one of the larger Indonesian islands.

Sri Lanka £500

Sri Lanka has been devastated by the fighting between Tamil Tigers and government forces. A sum of £500 has been given to the

Contacting Simon Jones

Please note: as new telephone numbers have come in for London, the Co-ordinator for London and the South East, Simon Jones' telephone number has changed to:

0207 639 8717
You can also contact him by e-mail: sjones@bms.org.uk

Canaan United Peace Prayer Mission which regularly organises mission tours into areas of Sri Lanka. On these tours they usually distribute clothes, food, mats, books and Bibles.

Mozambique £25,000

Twenty five thousand pounds has been given via Baptist World Aid to assist the Baptist Convention of Mozambique in providing water purifying tablets, medicines and food to help some of those who have lost their homes in the worst flooding Mozambique has known for 50 years, followed by devastation brought about by Cyclone Eline. An estimated 200,000 Mozambicans had already been displaced by flood waters before the cyclone hit.



PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE GOLDWATER/NETWORK

An old man walks to safety at Chibuto, Mozambique, having been saved from the floods.

Signs and Blunders

A newish young female missionary was speaking in church and wanting to say she was very embarrassed by something that had happened to her. She kept saying how embarrassed she was, and the word she used for 'embarrassed' was one she had concocted herself and made to sound Spanish - embarazada. Someone in the congregation sniggered, but most realised the linguistic mistake. However they could not hold back when she went on to explain that the reason for her condition was the pastor. Embarazada in Spanish means pregnant!

From John Passmore, BMS Regional Secretary for Asia and North Africa

I recently came across some notes about our early Nepali language gaffs. What difference can a few letters can make? Quite a lot as we found out to our embarrassment. The gaffs are followed by what we really meant to say!

Kukurko maasu man parchha
Kukhuraako maasu man parchha

I like dog meat.
I like chicken meat.

Wahaa mero goru hunuhunchha
Wahaa mero guru hunuhunchha

He is my ox.
He is my teacher.

Maile chiya pasal khaae
Maile chiya pasalma khaae

I ate the tea shop.
I ate at the tea shop.

Tapaaiko shrimati sikal chha?
Tapaaiko shrimatiko sikal chha?

Is your wife a bicycle?
Does your wife have a bicycle?

Fortunately, the Nepali people we spoke to were very gracious in correcting our mistakes and were quick to forgive!

From David McLellan, BMS Manager for Mission Partnerships, and formerly with BMS in Nepal.

Check Out May/June 2000

May 2000

Arrivals

Mark and Suzana Greenwood from Fortaleza, Brazil
Sue Headlam from Rangamati Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

Departures

Kevin and Linda Donaghy to Palmela, Portugal
Derek and Joanna Punchard to Curitiba, Brazil
Jacqui Wells to Chiang Mai, Thailand

June 2000

Arrivals

Ann and Gordon McBain from North Africa
Sarah Hall from North Africa
Sylvia Bonsor from North Africa
Joyce and Stuart Filby from Ostend, Belgium

Departures

Joyce and Stuart Filby to Ostend, Belgium
Caroline and Tim Trimble to Kathmandu, Nepal



"My worst nightmare is coming true. We're boat people!"

world

mission link



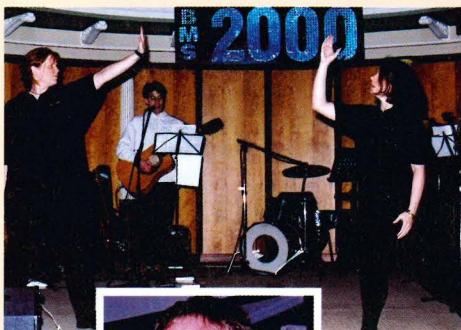
Leicestershire celebrates

All people, all places, all ages was the theme for this year's BMS Celebration Praise in which people from all over Leicestershire gathered for an evening of worship, stimulating drama, creative dance, livelink telephone connections and a powerful address by a former BMS Zimbabwe Action Team member, Revd Edward Ibberson.

The Translucent Theatre Company had a key part in the evening – following on from their success at the Baptist Assembly when it was last in London, and soon to be going on tour with their latest production of the Bible Society's 'Entertaining Angels'. The recently established Christian dance group Radi8 performed a dance to the song 'From the squalor of a borrowed stable', and Regeneration music group provided the music for the evening. These three groups are all part of Oadby Baptist Church.

BMS Co-ordinator for the Midlands, Theo Lambourne, interviewed both Mark and Claire Ord, BMS workers in Genoa, Italy, over a live phone link and Rachel Lambourne who last year had been part of a BMS Action Team in Nepal.

An offering was taken from which around £350 will go to the BMS Relief Fund.



**LES CÈDRES
CHRISTIAN FRENCH
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INTENSIVE SUMMER SESSION

10 to 28 JULY

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Penuel Welsh Baptist Church

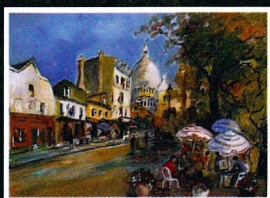
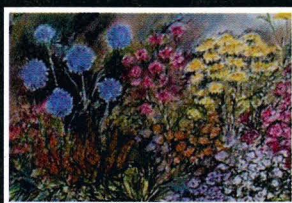
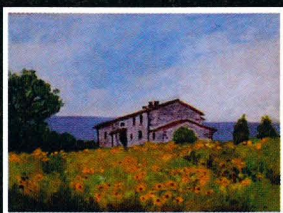
When the young people at Penuel Welsh Baptist Church, Bangor asked their BMS Co-ordinator, Delyth Wyn Davies, how they could get involved in a specific work in another part of the world, they hit on the idea of supporting a BMS Action Team. Not only will this church be receiving the India Team during their spring tour, but they've also been receiving the India Team's prayer letters, and have been praying for them, sending cards to them, and arranged a Christmas Toy Fair which raised £170 towards their support. In February they held a BMS fun event for the Sunday school, when people of all ages travelled in their imagination to be with the Team in India through games, dressing up, acting out Indian customs and hearing about some of the Team's experiences. Altogether they raised £400 for BMS that day.

Penuel church would encourage everyone who is thinking of inviting a BMS Action Team to spend a week with them in 2001 to make contact with their Team before they go overseas, so they can get to know and support them during their whole year out.



Paintings for sale

Olive Phillips is offering some of her paintings for sale in aid of BMS work in Kosovo. The pictures are framed, and £50.00 is being asked for each painting. For details of other pictures also for sale (but not featured here) please contact Olive on 01489 690883 or e-mail: ron@rphillips.fsnet.co.uk



mb magazine

too good to

keep to yourself

Refugees - who'll be their neighbour?

Now it's your opportunity to find out more, to give, to pray and to go...

INFORMATION AND PRAYER RESOURCES

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☐ **Congo**

☐ **Indonesia**

☐ **Thailand**

☐ I would like to start receiving news/prayer letters from:

☐ **Robert & Catherine Atkins**

so that I can pray for their part in making Jesus known worldwide.

GOING

☐ I would like to find out more about:

☐ **the vacancies advertised on page 31**, especially
.....(please state)

☐ **other long-term vacancies**

☐ **being a BMS Volunteer**

☐ **overseas Action Teams** (Year Teams)

☐ **UK Year Action Teams**

☐ **Summer Teams**

Giving to BMS

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RIVER of life?

Caring • Healing • Planting

The rivers in Bangladesh are essential for transport, crops, food and life. But they are also a carrier of death, destruction and disease. Many of the people who live near them are desperately poor and malnourished. BMS World

Mission in association with Operation

Agri are working with the

Community Health

Programme caring,

healing and

planting for a

future generation

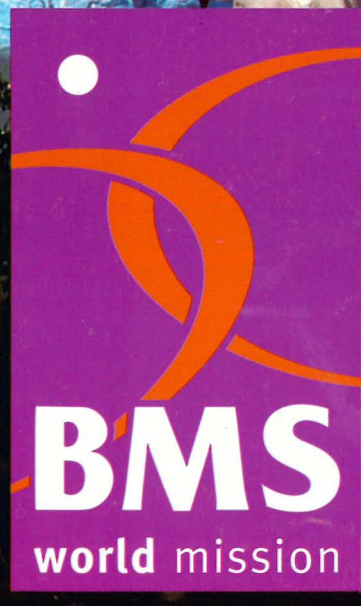
in a country

where 700 children

die a day.

More details

in July/August *mb*.



Harvest Appeal 2000

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the other
front line

RIVER of life?

Caring • Healing • Planting

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of life for the **people** of
Bangladesh

See centre
page insert
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details

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the other front line

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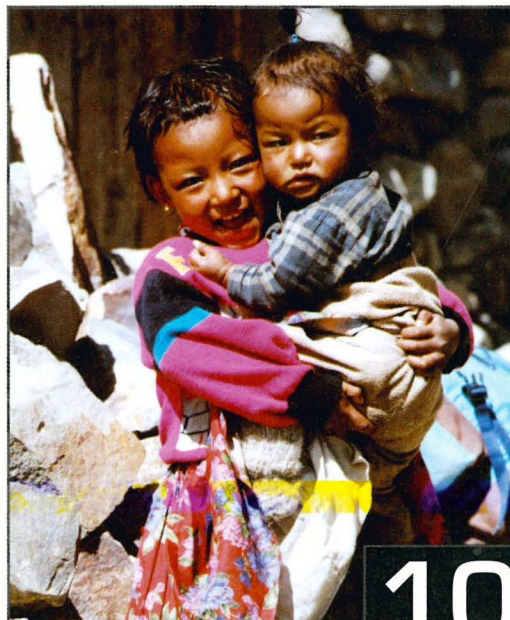
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mh



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With best wishes

Jan



OPEN DOORS



After the Kaduna riots the National Council of States met and northern governors agreed to suspend the implementation of Sharia law. Several have subsequently proceeded

OPEN DOORS

mb july : august 2000 5

The pastor said he had met the North Korean dictator, Kim, and considered him "a lunatic." Despite three million victims of famine from floods and repeated poor harvests, the regime has refused to allow humanitarian aid to be distributed systematically, but instead stockpiled it for military use in the event of war, he said.

The pastor was speaking earlier this year, at a conference in Germany. (Religion Today)

Sudan More bombing of the innocents

Further to the item in 'News in Brief' May/June 2000 *mb*, it has now been reported that the largest hospital in southern Sudan has been bombed twice in seven days by the government of Sudan. The human rights organisation, International Christian Concern (ICC), said that doctors were calling

it a miracle that although 12 bombs were dropped on the compound for the first attack, only two workers and 100 patients were killed. A week later 15 bombs exploded within 50 yards of the hospital but these did not cause any deaths nor significant damage to the hospital.

The civilian missionary hospital is situated in the small village of Lui, where it is run by the charity, Samaritan's Purse, and has treated over 100,000 people since 1997.

Steven Snyder, the President of ICC, has visited the hospital, and commented, "These people were not soldiers, but were mostly women and children. The government of Sudan, under the leadership of the National Islamic Front, is committing nothing less than barbaric butchery against these poor people in South Sudan. What will it take before the rest of the world becomes outraged?"

The President of Samaritan's Purse, Franklin Graham (son of Revd Billy Graham) also commented, "For more than 25 years, Samaritan's Purse has

helped people all over the world recover from wars of hatred, but this is the first time we've ever been so blatantly and continuously attacked by the government of the very people we are trying to help." But he went on to say, "Our medical staff (are) committed to staying."

(Christian Daily News)

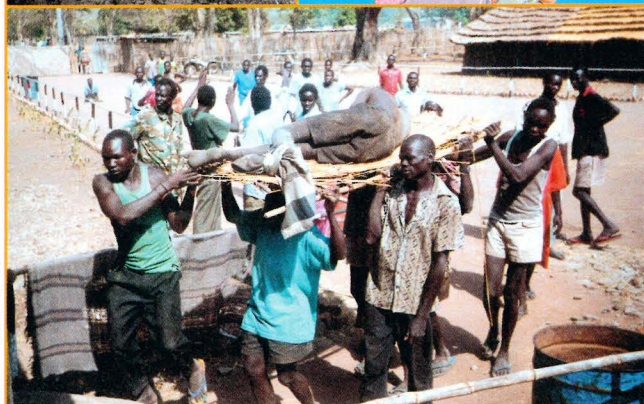
Middle East Christian broadcasts now on daily basis

From April this year Christian broadcasting in the Middle East and North

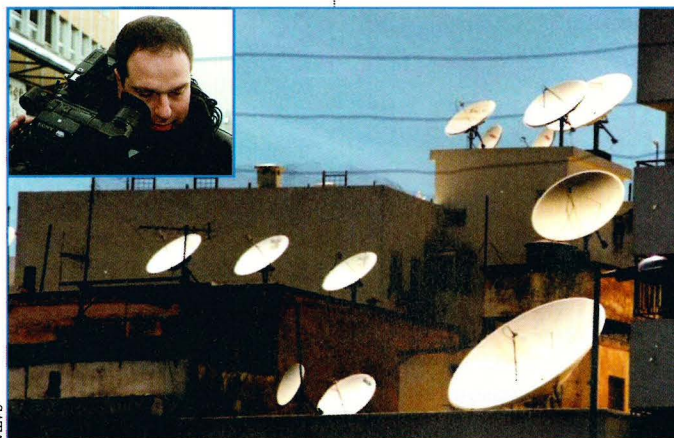
will be easier for viewers to find and continue watching a channel that is on every day."

Ascott went on to say, "The commencement of a daily broadcast is a milestone not only for SAT-7 and its partner agencies, but for all of Christian media in the Arab world. This achievement is just another indicator that the Church in this region is alive, healthy and reaching out."

SAT-7 is a partnership of churches and agencies, of which BMS is a member, which exists to encourage the life and witness of the Middle Eastern Church. It is owned by a Board controlled by Middle Eastern Christians and has the open support of most



SAMARITAN'S PURSE



SAT-7

Africa has taken a giant step forward. On 3 April SAT-7, the satellite television service for Christians of the Middle East and North Africa, expanded its broadcasts from four to seven days per week.

SAT-7 began its schedule of transmissions in May 1996 with an initial two-hour broadcast each week. Since then it has increased its air time at least once every year, but this step is seen as the most significant to date. The Chief Executive, Terence Ascott, said, "This move enables us to reach a wider audience for the simple reason that it

denominations in the region, as well as that of numerous western agencies. Its programmes are politically and religiously sensitive to the complex situation in the Middle East and North Africa. Over half of SAT-7's broadcast schedule is made up of original Arabic programming.

In the Arab world television is the main means of information and entertainment, with 95 per cent of the population now owning at least one television set. It is estimated that 100 million people in the region have direct access to satellite TV. (SAT-7)

Nepal Khimti starts power production

Khimti 1 Hydropower Project started production of electricity to Nepal's national grid by the commissioning of the first unit earlier this year. All five units are scheduled to be on line before the end of May, adding 60 MW of power capacity to the national grid. BMS project engineer Peter Harwood has been heavily involved in bringing this to fruition.

During its construction the project has generated approximately 150,000 man months of employment which means that professionally skilled Nepalese workers will now be able to be involved in future tunnelling and

hydropower projects.

The project holds the record for achieving the highest national tunnelling productivity; it has the longest headrace tunnel (7,900m) and penstock (1,000m) in the country. It is the first major private sector hydropower project in Nepal with a large foreign investment. It has been promoted by Butwal Power Company Ltd, a Nepalese company, in conjunction with three Norwegian companies. Throughout the construction phase it enjoyed good labour relations.

It will be one of the first major projects to be completed within the original schedule, despite very difficult tunnelling conditions.

Mozambique BMS helps flood relief

Hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans are still left without homes and crops following the worst flooding in the country's history. Tragedy struck when Cyclone Eline hit Mozambique, and rains swept west into South Africa, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana. Rivers became torrents and dams overflowed, sending sheets of water east through Mozambique to the sea.

The Limpopo River, which previously had been reduced to almost a trickle by drought, swelled to an estimated 16 km (9.6 miles) wide. It washed away village after tiny village, as well as the regional capital of Xai-Xai.

BMS has given £110,000 via Baptist World Aid to help rebuild lives by providing

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

Two faces. One is old and wrinkled, full of years. Seen a lot and maybe suffered a lot. The other is young, shy, much to learn but with an innocent optimism for the future. I met them yards apart in Albania, that poorest of Europe's counties.

The woman had lived through the 45 closed years of Albania. Under Stalinist Enver Hoxha's rule the people were told they were the most successful of peoples, and must always be ready to defend their prosperity against invaders. Let anyone argued all political parties except the Communist were banned, political opponents killed and some 400,000 others deported for their contrary views. Everything was tightly controlled with extreme censorship. The state security network, the Sigurimi, watched everyone and eliminated any dissent. All religious bodies were banned and the state declared atheist.

Hoxha died in 1985 and in 1991 Communist rule ended and democracy began. A country so deceived and so poor was bound to have ongoing troubles, most seriously in 1997 when about 2,000 were killed.

There were bullet scars on the walls of the buildings beside where I photographed these two. For the old lady, they were part of a troubled history she hoped was passing but I guess she knew she might not live long enough to see a radically changed Albania. But the young lad could hope that one day his land will be strong economically with near-full employment, streets relatively free of crime, where young people like him will choose to stay because they're proud and glad to be in Albania.

BMS is working to help the lad's dream come true. We believe we're part of writing better pages of history, with dreams for that lad greater than he can imagine as we hope to introduce him to Jesus. I pray the history written on his face one day makes heaven and earth rejoice. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS

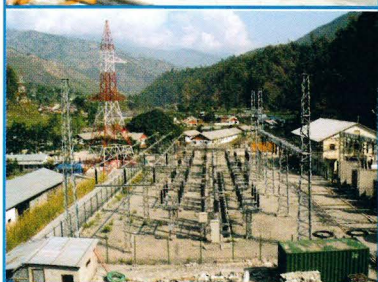
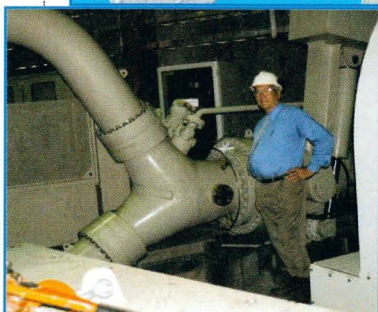


relief, food and medicines.

A Southern Baptist missionary, Dianne Randolph, said, "Whereas the people are hungry now, they will still be hungry next year if no one helps them replant their farms. All their crops were washed

away. This means that not only do they not have food, but they also don't have seed to start all over. If they don't replant now, the hunger could last up to 18 months or more."

According to the World Food Programme, an



estimated 370,500 acres of staple food crops were wiped out while another third of the national cereal production suffered severe losses.

Many escaped with only the clothes on their backs when the waters started pouring into their homes. They climbed onto roofs made with mud and galvanised sheeting worrying whether the shaky structure would hold them. They climbed into trees, where they had to wait days for help to come.

When the waters receded a little, and they were able to climb down, they saw bodies of dead animals and dead people floating on the water. Contaminated water quickly gives rise to disease; malaria and cholera have spread.

It is reported that 500,000 people are still



living in camps. Many do not have homes to return to. An estimated 150 schools have also been destroyed, along with medical clinics and transportation systems.

(Christian Daily News, Assist, Baptist Press)

INTERNATIONAL AID

Vinoth Ramachandra

Disability: In praise of weakness

What can the mentally and physically disabled teach us?

Rarely do the disabled command our respect. Unless of course they happen to be a Beethoven, a Helen Keller or a Stephen Hawking. But here the respect is not for them as humans, but for their almost superhuman abilities at overcoming all odds. Usually the disabled embarrass us. We want to banish them from sight, either by killing them (if the law permits) or by putting them in remote institutions. Or else we try to make them 'fit', by trying to make them conform to our norms of success.

I suggest that the disabled among us present an uncomfortable challenge to our modern illusions of individual self-sufficiency and human perfectibility. The handicapped hold up a mirror to our own frailty, vulnerability and inter-dependence as a human community. That is the human condition. But in our will to power, we see vulnerability as weakness and inter-dependence as constraint. We equate freedom with self-gratification, limits with oppression. We see our lives as belonging to ourselves alone.

Unfortunately, our mortality makes a mockery of our pretension to be gods. This is probably why so many doctors in our hospitals run away from talking about death with their patients. As long as modern medical practitioners think of themselves as wonder-workers, and of their work as one of human engineering rather than alleviating human suffering wherever possible, they will always think of disability and death as 'failure'.

But what of their own death? Or even the loss of their skills, say in a serious accident – will they still command respect as humans? The disabled force us to face such issues that lie at the heart of human existence. How we relate to the most vulnerable and defenceless among us may be a measure of our own humanness, as individuals and as a society. ●

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES



For more details call
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01235 517641

lee bray's diary



LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Continuing the extracts from his diary.

Tuesday 26

Roused at 5am. Today is a strike day in Dhaka, and we have to be across the city before 6am. By 5.55 there is still no sign of our driver. Venturing outside we find ourselves locked in behind a metal gate. The security guard is fast asleep in his hut, despite his radio, whistle, and musical clock. His dog patrols the courtyard and growls at us from the other side of the gate. Outside in the alley, we can hear our driver trying to call the guard. This would be comical if it weren't serious! After several minutes we manage to wake the guard (and probably others too!) He looks sheepish as he unlocks the gates. If this were reported he would lose his job! As we set off it is past 6.15. Our destination today (and over the next two days) is a Consultation involving BMS, LMS (a German mission) and BBS (the local Bangladesh Baptist Sangha). As it is so early we have a room with some beds to rest. We also share the room with some mosquitoes! We gather for breakfast - boiled eggs, bread, marmalade and hot, sweet tea. The Consultation will be conducted in English. I have no official capacity, so listen and learn. In the evening, after dinner, we rejoin the mosquitoes in our room. Sue reassures us there is no malaria in Dhaka, just an outbreak of denghi fever! We stay in the room until it is judged safe to drive back to the flat, shortly after 11pm. In bed that night the sounds outside begin to seem familiar, but I sleep little.



Wednesday 27

The day begins, as usual, with a cold shower, but not so early as yesterday. We travel through Dhaka at 8.30am. The Consultation ploughs on, but the local church seems to value it highly. That evening we are taken to Dhaka's smart hotel, The Sonargoan, for coffee. Dhaka by night has an air of magic. The hotel is quite different from the city - polished marble halls, fountains, walls of glass, shopping malls and restaurants, designed to give visitors the right impression, but the giveaway is the presence of soldiers outside. They are there to keep the beggars out.



Thursday 28

All of us have coffee and desserts for less than £3. Wake at 7am. Six hours sleep last night - wonderful! Consultation in the morning, and in the afternoon we visit the Blind School for Girls, whose first director was Veronica Campbell from Plymouth, where I grew up. I had no idea that I would be seeing the work established by the first missionary I ever knew. The school's most serious problem is its site. When built it was on raised ground in a largely undeveloped area. Since then Dhaka has grown. The result is that the site, which was at first on ground higher than its surroundings, is now on low ground and liable to flooding. It is considering whether to abandon the ground floor and build an extra one on top. There is no easy solution. Back at the Consultation we all participate in a closing act of worship. We each light a candle and these are placed in a circle around a larger 'Master candle', symbolising our unity in Christ. The act is moving in its simplicity. We have made some good friends, Bangladeshi and German.

To be continued next issue.

Can God use

my wife Caroline and I are both Chartered Accountants and we were very involved in our Baptist church in Pontewydd, Cwmbran, in South Wales. In 1994 we felt that the Lord was speaking to us to serve overseas. That was clear, but what could we possibly do? In what capacity could we serve, if at all? These were our concerns before approaching BMS.

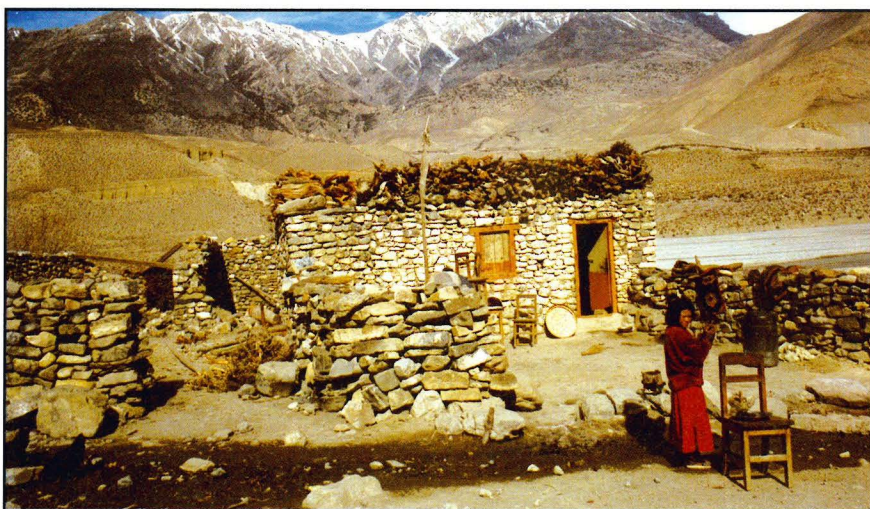
Surely accountants were not needed on the mission field? We became convinced that perhaps with some retraining we might be able to do a useful job overseas.

An interview with Andrew North, then Manager for Mission Personnel, at BMS soon made us aware that accountants were much needed as part of mission work. In fact such skills were in short supply in many parts of the world and in particular, Nepal was desperately in need of an accountant.

This was the beginning of the story that led us to be seconded by BMS as Accountant (Tim) and Internal Auditor (Caroline) to the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) at its headquarters in Kathmandu.

UMN is one of the largest organisations in the Hindu kingdom of Nepal, providing assistance to the people of Nepal in health, rural developments, education and engineering. These sectors include such diverse programmes as hospitals, community health programmes, community enrichment and empowerment, education and training and many more areas of support to the people of Nepal. UMN has 35 major programmes of work and many smaller projects. The majority of the programmes run by UMN are based outside Kathmandu Valley. Some are so remote it can take days rather than hours to reach them from Kathmandu by road, plane or just walking. As its programmes are so remote, UMN co-ordinates the work from its centrally based office complex in Kathmandu.

Tim Trimble asked BMS this question



Caroline has recently ceased working as Internal Auditor for UMN to look after our twin daughters. I am now the Finance Director, with overall responsibility for all the finances of the large and complex organisation. My responsibilities are threefold:

Firstly, to ensure that each of the programmes of UMN has sufficient funds to operate. This part of the job often requires me to approach donors in richer countries like the UK, USA or Sweden to present them with the financial needs of UMN. Over £2 million each year is raised in this way. Some programmes also reply on personal donations from individuals. The finance office at UMN receives up to 50 donations per month in this way. Each donor or grant is processed and acknowledged.

Secondly, donors need to receive good, accurate financial reports, telling them about the way UMN spent the

money it was given. These reports are vitally important to keep donors happy and to keep the funds flowing in.

Thirdly, all the finances at UMN need to be properly controlled and accounted for. With UMN offices throughout a country that has poor communications, it is important to pay regular visits to isolated locations. Often it is the isolated office that handles much of the spending of UMN, and yet has no local bank, few supplies for programme activities, and local people who do not have the training or experience to work for UMN.

As you can imagine, keeping the UMN finances ticking over with a small staff of seven at HQ in Kathmandu is a busy task. I hope that one day my job may be undertaken by a Nepali national, but until such a person can be identified and trained in the technical aspects of the role, an expatriate qualified accountant will continue to be needed to oversee the UMN finances.

Of course, both Caroline and I are involved in many activities outside the UMN finance department, but that's another story... ●

Tim Trimble works for BMS, and is seconded to UMN in Nepal where he is Finance Director

accountants?



UMN Facts	
Number of missionary families	120
Number of employees	1,000
Annual turnover	£5 million
Sectors of assistance	Health, rural development, education, engineering
Number of major projects	35

Doorkeepers for God

Gerry Myhill enthuses about those who minister to tired missionaries

as long term missionaries serving in Brazil, we have experienced many changes over the years. One of these changes has been that in the early years we were able, while on home visits, to stay with parents. However, now that our parents have either died or are in sheltered housing, we have come to depend more and more on the houses maintained by BMS for missionaries on home assignment.

We value highly this accommodation as it provides an answer to a need that we have, but perhaps our needs and expectations are not fully understood by many. I think that I speak for most missionaries when I say that we mostly return to the UK physically, emotionally and spiritually drained and, at a critical time, are denied the comfort and support of a family that no longer exists.

When we arrive in the UK, perhaps unaware ourselves of our condition, unaware that we have a set of special needs, unaware that we are more sensitive than normal to what lies ahead of us, unaware that we are stepping into a potentially traumatic experience over which we have no control at all, we step into the care of the people that care for and maintain the house in which we have to stay – our 'home from home'. Our thoughts run something like this. 'What sort of house is it? Will it be clean? Will everything work? Can we sit down and have a cup of tea?'

You might think, 'are these things important?' After all, the missionary is only there for a few weeks so it doesn't really matter if things are a bit rough and ready. However those few weeks are the few weeks that the missionary and his family have been longing for to rest and renew strength, so essential if the missionaries are to be able to visit churches in Britain and give a true, informative picture of

what the Lord is doing with them and BMS in the part of the world in which they are serving.

I think that the people who look after these houses and care for our needs are a special people. I don't suppose that many know who they are and what is expected of them. From what I understand, they are responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the actual building itself. They strive to keep the house, the furniture, fridge etc in a clean and serviceable order. Also they keep the bedding, towels, pots and pans and a thousand and one other things up to scratch.

What thanks do these unsung heroes receive? Very little I imagine as when we, the missionaries, arrive, we are too tired and needing to be ministered to, to really show much gratitude and then the time has flown by and we have a plane to catch and we are gone. Instead of leaving gratitude we leave an empty house that has to be prepared for the next family that are due home.

To try to compensate for that, we would like to say thank you to two such families who helped to make our stay in Britain a time of refreshment. Firstly, to Revd David and Doris Doonan who welcomed us on our arrival in England, invited us into their home for meals and did much to smooth our stay in Eltham where their church cares for two mission houses.

Secondly, to Mr and Mrs Buchanan, the couple who look after the mission house in East Kilbride. They met us on our arrival and with lots of loving care and attention introduced us to the house and its workings. The loving care with which they received us linked together with the spotless condition of the house, plus the fact that everything worked, meant that we were able to relax and enjoy the house, go out and enjoy Scotland and more importantly, go out and enjoy our visits to the churches that we were to visit. Thank you, both families, for caring. ●

Gerry Myhill is involved in church planting and Association work in Paraná, Brazil.





Geoff Bland considers the work he's been doing

"Is it boring?"

Surely this time our beloved editor has got it wrong. She tells me that the working title for this issue of *mh* – that is, the title before she finally firms up what ends up on the front cover – is 'The unglamorous spiritual gifts', and then asks ME to write an article! Just in case there is any misunderstanding she spells out that the theme is intended to look at those activities "that are sometimes considered a bit boring, trivial or not very worthy". I ask you! To be fair, even my wife wouldn't call me glamorous. But "boring, trivial and unworthy" indeed!

How can teaching Thai men and women ever be boring? They come from all parts of Thailand, including a large number from various hill-tribes. Most are young, but others are in their 30s and 40s. Some have given up high paying jobs, others have known only rural poverty. Some are bright, some are not! Teaching them is hard work but it is never dull.

How can teaching Bible students ever be trivial? There is nothing more valuable than the Word of God, and the work of explaining it and applying it must be one of the most rewarding jobs in the world. These past seven years of teaching at Bangkok Institute of Theology have brought with them an overwhelming sense of personal privilege and gratitude for such an opportunity to grapple with the teaching of the Scriptures.

How can teaching trainees for ministry ever be unworthy? Each year around 15 to 20 students complete the four year course and go on to full-time Christian work. Some will work alongside other pastors in large churches, some will become responsible for small churches, some will work with organisations such as Youth for Christ. The pay is small and eventually some of them will take up secular employment to support themselves. But all will be equipped to serve God in Christian ministry in a country where only a fraction of one per cent of the population are Christians.

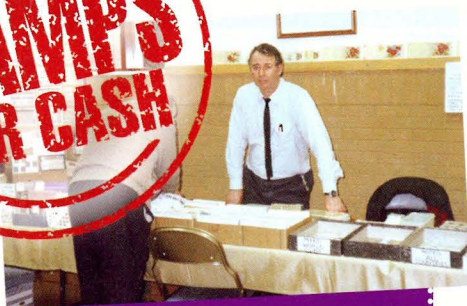
So, no doubt about it, the editor is way off line on this one.

Hang on, I owe her an apology. I've overlooked the words "sometimes considered". So it's not that she thinks this herself but is concerned that other people might have that idea. Though surely not the readers of *mh*?

Surely not you? ●

Geoff Bland has been with BMS, teaching at the Bangkok Institute of Theology for the past seven years.





Getting money from stamps by **Richard Camp**

It was over 70 years ago that the first income from stamps appeared in the BMS accounts – the princely sum of £60. Last year the Stamp Bureau passed £8,000 to BMS. It is believed to be the oldest stamp charity in the UK.

The majority of people get letters from time to time, and it's so easy to tear the stamp off, knowing it will help to raise money for BMS. Last year David Beaumont, who runs the Stamp Bureau Sorting Department, received nine million stamps – as well as cards and coins – from people in Baptist churches.

Most stamps are ordinary British ones up to first class value, but we also get in better British stamps and collections, postcards, tea cards etc which I sell on by attending stamp fairs, and also better foreign and commonwealth stamps, which are handled by Douglas Neilson.

Of the £8,000 passed to BMS general funds by the Stamp Bureau last year, £7,260 was made from selling stamps, £404 from coins and £56 from cards.

There have occasionally been valuable finds. I once put my hand in a box of loose stamps and pulled out a 1d Black – worth about £40. We also received a Greek coin from before Christ which sold for £80.

It is a privilege to use my hobby to raise money for BMS. In doing so I have made Christian friends all over the country. ●

For more details about collecting stamps for BMS, fill in the coupon on page 35

Richard Camp is a retired policeman from Telford

THE GIFT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Karen Gordon tells of when her husband Iain was very ill



Sitting in a hot vehicle for two hours doesn't sound encouraging, does it? The medical team who flew to Kathmandu to transfer Iain to a Singapore hospital were due to arrive at the hospital at 9.00 am. They were delayed six hours in immigration. The ambulance booked to take us and them to the airport did arrive at 9.00 am. Ambulances are few in Kathmandu. That ambulance and its crew needed to stay at the hospital so that when the medical team were finally released, transport was available. How to get an ambulance to stay put? Sit in it! That's what three friends did for several hours – sat in a hot ambulance, one at a time, ensuring the crew were always nearby. An unattractive, boring job when the 'excitement' was upstairs in the ICU.

During those weeks in September, many people supported us; caring for our boys, travelling to Singapore to be with us, praying for Iain. Others helped, apparently unnoticed, in ways 'trivial' in comparison, but without which the experience would have been harder. Friends did whatever was necessary, regardless of whether it was glamorous and up-front or just mundane. This was as much an encouragement to me as the more visible contributions of support. Some created e-mail address lists so people were informed and could pray; an ICU nurse cared for Iain all day, fed and put her children to bed, then returned for the nightshift; friends came laden with coffee and soup.

When our three sons were called to Singapore at short notice, two friends packed for them in 15 minutes flat. They packed up our house, paid bills, stored valuables and made the building secure. Eight days later they unpacked it again for the boys' return. These weren't folk with nothing better to do – they had their own families, had been looking after extra children and had already given up sleep to help.

Even for those who helped most directly and came to Singapore, life wasn't exciting. Each left and missed their families, went sleepless for nights, entertained the boys, slept on hard waiting room floors, cried with me and sat by Iain's bed staying awake, so that if he opened his eyes, a familiar face smiled back. ●

Karen Gordon works for BMS in Nepal, seconded to UMN, along with her husband Iain, who is now fully recovered.

Audrey Rowland is making the world go round

Switch on the computer, type in the password, log on – another day begins. A day of letters and telephone calls, of e-mails and meetings. A mailing to be sent off to all World Mission Link speakers; details of a missionary's Home Assignment programme sent to Link-Up groups; two other Home Assignment programmes needing to be sorted out; requests from Link-Up groups to be registered; requested information sent out; letters written.

When I started my present job friends commented "But you're a people person, not a paper person." The truth, I soon discovered, was that people and paper are intertwined. Yes, I do spend a lot of time writing letters, answering telephone calls, sending out information, writing reports, desperately fighting the growing mountain of paper on the desk. But – if the admin isn't done churches can't plan world mission visits or the visits of their Link-Up

missionary. If the admin is not done, missionaries don't know what they should be doing when or where, and training days are likely to be a shambles.

Yes, I spend a lot of time dealing with paper, but I also spend a lot of time in touch with people. People who are trying to raise the profile of world mission in their churches and need information that I can give. Link-Up contact people anxious for news of their Link-Up missionary for the prayer group. Missionaries wondering

whether their Home Assignment programme is nearly arranged as they have a family engagement they want to fit in. Colleagues wondering if I know what's happening about this Link-Up group or that world mission engagement.

I wonder, is it paper (and the e-mails!) that makes the world go round? ●

Audrey Rowland, World Mission Link Organiser at BMS Didcot



Helen Vallis and why she enjoys paying the bills

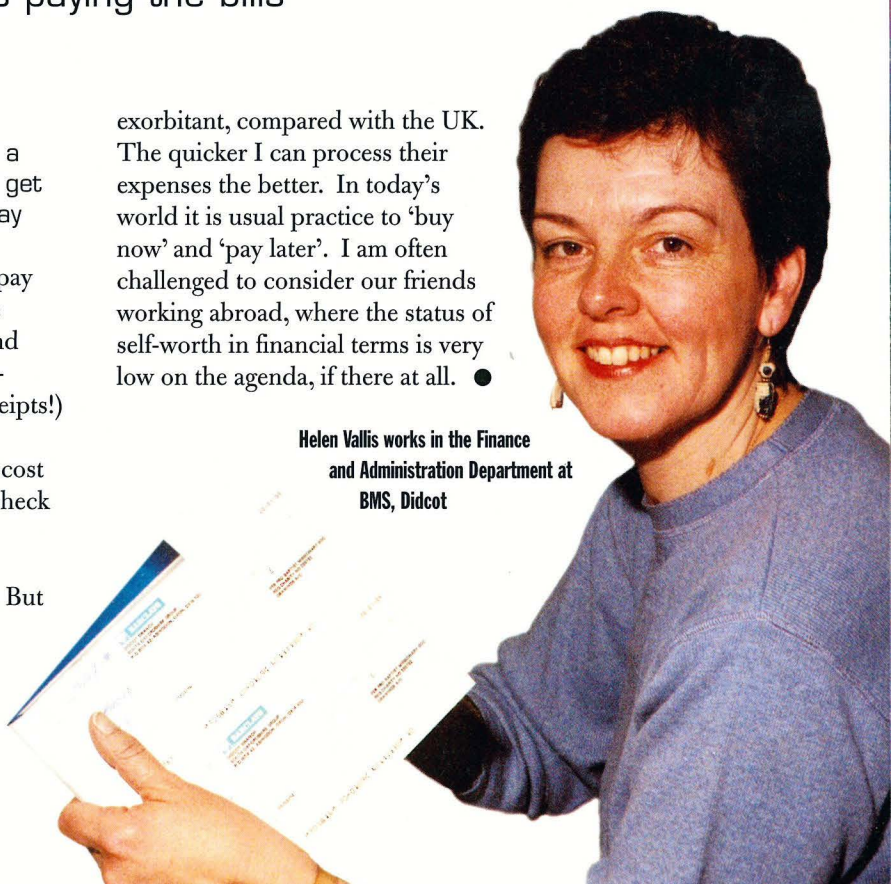
I work as part of a team in the Finance and Administration department at BMS. We have a structured day and we all need each other to get the tasks done. My job is to issue cheques and pay expenses.

We process around 130 cheques every month and pay funds into something like 75 bank accounts to pay the expenses of missionaries, home staff, Co-ordinators and committee members. (I could tell you which BMS Co-ordinator has a sweet tooth, as I check their petrol receipts!) Then there's also the need to pay suppliers. We have 'peaks' at the end of each month, when we are issuing cost reports to each department within BMS, so they can check their spending. We also peak each quarter when the General Committee expenses arrive.

To others my job may seem trivial and a bit boring. But it's part of a wider team effort that needs to happen; otherwise there would be total chaos. I find the most satisfying part is to reimburse missionaries expenses claims. Some of our fellow workers are living in countries where the standard of living costs are

exorbitant, compared with the UK. The quicker I can process their expenses the better. In today's world it is usual practice to 'buy now' and 'pay later'. I am often challenged to consider our friends working abroad, where the status of self-worth in financial terms is very low on the agenda, if there at all. ●

Helen Vallis works in the Finance and Administration Department at BMS, Didcot



Over 1,000 students in 20 years

David Boydell talks about the work of Les Cèdres



Above: Les Cèdres Language Centre, Massy, France.
Right: Staff at the school. Left to right: Catherine Bankolé,
David and Jessie Boydell, Marie-Christine Bosc, Alain Germain,
Marie Iods, Reine Gugenheim.

Les Cèdres is the Christian Language School in Massy, France. Over 50 BMS workers have learned French here (along with nearly 1,200 others).

Although very necessary, language learning can be a difficult time for missionary candidates, particularly for those whose talents lie in other areas, and some are impatient to be on the field doing "real missionary work"! Studying with others from many different countries, cultures and church backgrounds can be stimulating, but at times frustrating too.

The school has welcomed nearly 1,200 students during the past 20 years, most of them missionary candidates bound for the French-speaking world, as well as some 600 summer school participants.

The summer schoolers, aged between 15 and 80, come from all



walks of life, and spend three weeks of their summer studying French in the mornings and taking part in leisure activities and outings the rest of the time. The summer school students have an extra opportunity to practise their French in that students and staff eat together, and French is the only language allowed in the dining room!

Massy is a pleasant southern suburb of Paris, half an hour from Notre-Dame cathedral by the RER (express suburban railway), with good sports facilities, an excellent public library, and even a modern opera house. The language school stands in a garden of mature cedar trees. The building, owned by the French Baptist Federation, houses some staff, most of the single students and several of the couples. Other families are housed in furnished apartments within a few minutes' walking distance of the school.

David and Jessie Boydell, who met as BMS missionaries in Congo, have worked at the school for the past 17 years, David as Principal and Jessie as a teacher, and are supported by an able and enthusiastic team of teachers and other helpers.

The school truly has an international flavour, with students from over 35 countries (usually about a dozen nationalities at any one time) going to work in over 20 countries of the French-speaking world.

Students will be placed in one of the five different classes according to their level. Classes are small (ten students per class on average), and most of the students are highly motivated – a far cry from the experiences of many at school! They may spend periods of between six weeks and 18 months at the school, depending on their individual needs.

Three video rooms and a language laboratory are at the disposal of students, as well as a computer and e-mail link – a sign of the times! We hope to develop computer-assisted learning in the future. The nitty-gritty of grammar and vocabulary learning are not neglected however! Some



Above: Children in the crèche

Below: Students from Japan, Denmark and Norway.

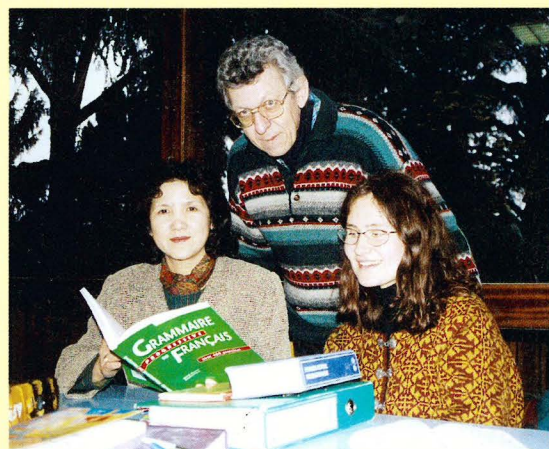
allowance for individual help is given in the daily 'surgery sessions', that is, times when a member of staff is available to deal with students' individual questions.

Real-life situations are to be found as soon as the student leaves the classroom: the daily chapel service, entirely in French, helps students to gain the most from the Sunday services and house groups in the various local churches, including the Massy Baptist Church, which meets in the centre, and where BMS missionaries and former Les Cèdres students Phil and Rosemary Halliday serve. Many local people, not all connected with the churches, also give freely of their time as language helpers, and students are welcome in the various societies in the town.

For students with children, the school has an on-site crèche for the under threes, and other children attend local nursery, primary, and secondary schools. There is a special class to welcome children who do not speak French, which helps them to adapt.

And for those who weren't so keen on coming here, they look back and see this period was so necessary for a fruitful ministry. One of the highlights of the staff's year is reading the annual 'former students' letter', and seeing that, by God's grace, their hard work is bearing fruit all over the French-speaking world! ●

David Boydell is a former BMS missionary, and is now Principal of Les Cèdres Christian Language School.



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Principal: David Boydell

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The gift of admin

How one man organised short-term missions to an orphanage in China

'babies are dying in Chinese orphanages, not from physical neglect, but from the emotional need of love and cuddles they are not receiving.' So began 'Living Tracts' in the March/April 1999 issue of *mh*, the story of ten people visiting an orphanage in China in 1998 on a short-term mission to take the love of Jesus in practical ways to the abandoned children. Last year a second group went to the same orphanage and this year preparations are well advanced for the third successive mission.

But how do such missions get started? What is the cost? How many should go? What if people feel called to go, but have no money? How will we be used at the orphanage? Is China dangerous? Can individuals take their Bibles, etc, etc? Just some of the questions that had to be worked through for the missions to succeed. Undoubtedly the gift of administration, perhaps the least glamorous of the spiritual gifts (1Cor 12:28), plays an essential part in making these missions happen.

When my wife Mary and I first felt called to go to China, I had no idea that I would become the organising administrator for a mission group, and neither did I realise how much work it involved. In hindsight I was God's obvious choice. I was self-employed, working from my home office equipped with computer, e-mail and fax, and my time was flexible, giving freedom to plan arrangements during normal working hours.

At first we had virtually no information about the mission. Telephone calls to the Christian organisation concerned established the cost, dates, location and accommodation in China, and the probable work routine with older babies and toddlers in the orphanage. Inquiring about air fares, I discovered that ten people were needed for a group rate, defining our desirable minimum group size.

When we told our Baptist church what we felt called to do and asked if anyone else would like to join us, two other couples immediately responded. After several weeks and some publicity in the church newsletter, three other people asked to join, bringing our numbers to nine. There was a problem though, one person who desperately wanted to go didn't have the £1,500 needed. Then a couple of weeks later a lady offered to support someone who couldn't afford to go! God's amazing provision came again last year for two people, and this year for four people, in different ways but without making any appeals!

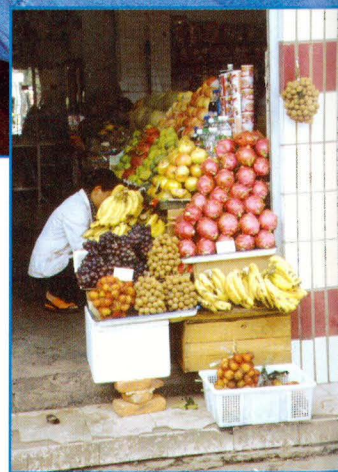
We felt the need to meet together and arranged monthly Saturday evenings over a meal. At the first one we were blessed by a visiting young man who had worked at the orphanage and happened to be on furlough in the UK! He brought along photographs of the children and described



life in the orphanage and China. He spoke Mandarin and was obviously quite influential in his area of work with the Chinese. He was full of God's Spirit and so positive about the orphanage and China when he answered our questions that he laid bare most of our fears. As a result a tenth person decided to join and our group was complete.

At group meetings we raised questions about the itinerary, eating in China, vaccinations, needs of the orphanage, etc, etc. I would then pass on our questions by e-mail to the couple who ran the organisation from SE Asia, hoping to receive replies in time for our next meeting.

The church fellowship was kept informed in the newsletter of our team activities and was amazingly encouraging, prayerful, and generous towards the needs of the orphanage. It had become a church owned mission,



nistration



even though for security reasons we could only say we were visiting East China.

As we prepare for our third mission, several local schools are interested and a High School year eight has voted the orphanage its charity of the year for fund raising. The excitement of going remains, heightened by reports of crackdowns by the authorities on Chinese Christians. What changes will we find and how many children adopted from the orphanage? How will the group react living together surrounded by a new and non-Christian culture? How will their emotions cope with cuddling abandoned Chinese children? How will God work through us and in us?

Seven months of preparation and meetings, a three week mission and then it's all over? In some ways what God wants to do is just beginning! Several members of the earlier groups are feeling that God is leading them into a whole new direction of life. Simeon, a hairdresser, is now working full-time with special needs children. A monthly Prayer for China meeting has just begun. Those who have experienced China have received a heart for its people and a deep longing for God's healing upon a hurting nation, and especially upon its abandoned children. ●

Some names, locations and minor details have been changed to protect the identity of those involved. For security reasons this article remains anonymous.

BMS supports work in China through the Amity Foundation.

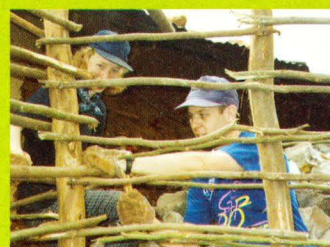
Living on a football pitch

The game of football is never far from the public eye, so it's not difficult to imagine a football pitch. Now imagine 3,000 people living in that space. They have one toilet and one water-point to every 300 people. There is no adequate sanitation, health care or nutrition. This is the situation in the Kibera slum, Nairobi, where nearly one million people live in two square km, and where 200 children die every month from easily curable diseases.

I'll never forget walking into Kibera for the first time. The first thing that hits you are the open sewers down the sides of the dirt tracks - liquid disease waiting to claim another young victim as children jump barefooted to and fro across channels of effluence. Each dwelling, the size of a garden shed, gives shelter to a family often numbering up to ten people. But the overwhelming impression I had as I was greeted by hundreds of excited children, amused by the sight of a foreigner walking through the rotting garbage, was one of the tangible presence of God in that place!

In the distance I could hear singing. The mamas were gathering together for one of their regular praise sessions. I could sense that God was working in the lives of these dear people, constantly living on the edge of disease, deprivation and death, and that they had far more wealth than me with my sanitised suburban lifestyle. Christian charity Soapbox Expeditions, for whom I work, are planning to build a clinic here and already several thousand pounds have been raised.

That's what happens when you're confronted with heart-stirring descriptions of depravity - the purse strings start to move. But this very act of sacrifice can restrict the growth of the kingdom if we fail to acknowledge, support and encourage the people behind the scenes; the administrators, the planners, the finance controllers and the secretaries. No one wants to support them, but without them, the whole operation stops! No wonder the practical skill of administration is listed as one of the spiritual gifts. God is into foundation building and everything we do stands or falls on the strength of it. Money spent on clinics, health programmes and feeding centres is wasted if the projects themselves are unsustainable. We need to encourage people in our churches with



the vital gift of administration so that we can build healthy infrastructures to support the projects of our visions and dreams! ●

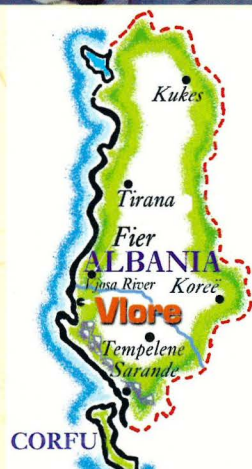
Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions



A series edited by **Jan Kendal** that looks at towns and cities around the world where BMS personnel are working by **Prema Tennekoon**



Vlore



History

Vlore was founded in the 4th century BC in the territory of an Illyrian tribe. A fortress was built in the centre of this ancient city, the ruins of which can be found in today's Flag Square. In ancient times the city was known as Aulon, a name given to it by early Greek settlers meaning 'channel'. The town, built as a sea port, minted its own coins and held territory in the hinterland up to the Vjosa River. It became an early Christian centre, and grew in importance after a great earthquake changed the course of the Vjosa River, causing the decline of the regional centre

Appollonia (Fier). By the 5th century, a bishopric had been established in the town.

With the decline of the Eastern Roman Empire, Vlore became an unimportant fishing village. It reappeared in the 13th century when it was taken by the Normans and served as a base for attacks on the Byzantine Empire. Between 1266 and 1812 Vlore changed hands many times.

In 1912, Albania was declared an independent state with Vlore as its capital. This was short lived because Italy occupied the city soon after 1914. When Ahmet Zog came to power in Albania in 1925 and declared himself king,

forces opposed to the new king Zog set up a revolutionary headquarters in Vlore. The town grew during the inter-war period and benefited from King Zog's projects to improve water supply and sanitation. Before this period Vlore had been the worst area in the whole of Albania for malarial infection.

When the Communists came to power in Albania, the port was initially leased to the Soviet Union as a submarine base. Vlore has never recovered its former prosperity. Under the dictator Hoxha, Vlore became a recruiting centre for the Albanian secret police. It has since grown in importance as an agricultural centre with large scale planting of olive and fruit trees, a centre for food processing and for oil and bitumen-exporting industries.

First Impressions

The natural scenery in and around Vlore is very beautiful. Vlore bay with the sea and glimpses of a small, distant island at the outlet of the bay, the mountains which appear all around, hills covered

Left: Monument in main square, Vlore

Below: Vlore bay and mountains



with olive trees, the vast town with sunshine and blue skies impress visitors who may approach from the north, south or east.

As you go through the town you can see the signs of a former thriving city in the many ruins of former parks and gardens and in the few older buildings that remain. Yet there is also much activity today. Everywhere there are buildings going up, others started in recent years are left unfinished due to lack of funds. Attempts are being made to plant flowers along the main roads and in the town squares. The city is alive with people rushing about or sitting around, the roads bustling with noisy traffic, the shopping areas, markets and small stalls around are crowded with people buying or calling out their wares.

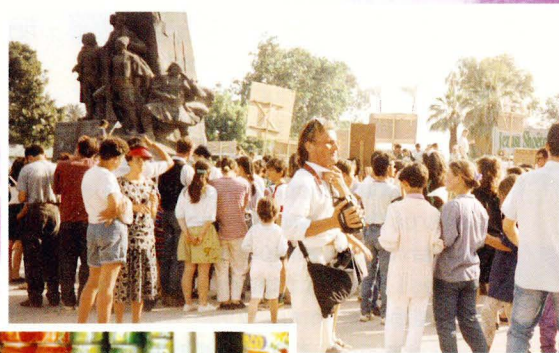
Geography

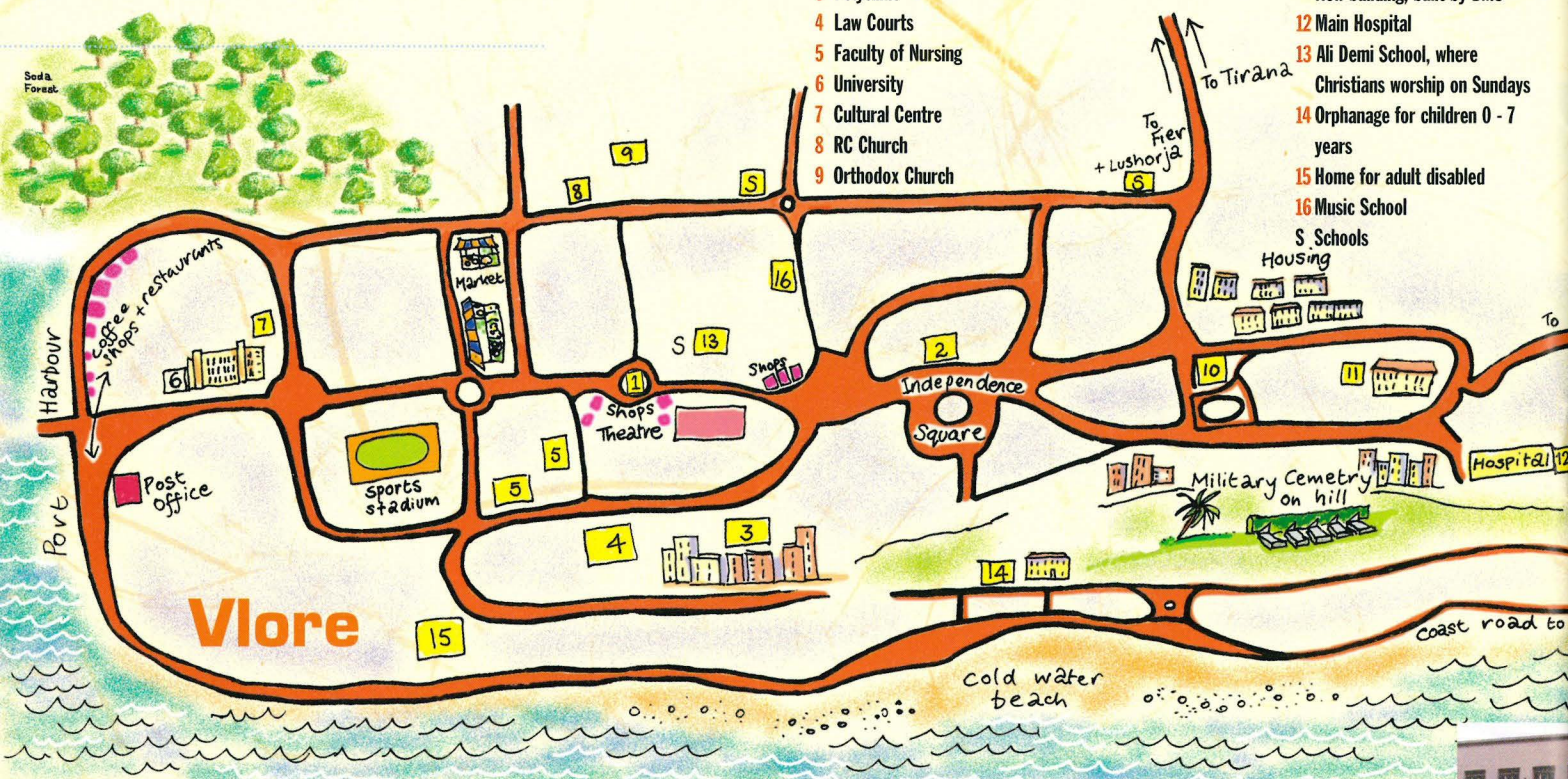
The district of Vlore is one of the largest in the country covering an area of 1,609 square km. The biggest rivers are the Vjosa, Shushica, and Dukati White River. The district has a natural lake near Dukati in the South and a lagoon near Narta in the north. A range of mountains starts from the coastline of Vlore. The highest mountain is Cika that rises to a height of 2,045m.

People

Vlore district had an estimated population of 210,000 with 120,000 living within the city itself. This will not now be accurate, as the past ten years have seen dramatic population

Main photograph:
Back street Vlore,
woman spinning wool
Inset top: Gathering for
start of March for
Jesus
Below: A shop in Vlore





movements around the Vlore region, and the rest of Albania. Thousands of Vlore inhabitants have emigrated out of the city, mostly to Italy and Greece. At the same time, thousands of villagers have left their homes in the countryside to move into the city. Lack of housing has forced some to squat in unoccupied buildings or former industrial sites that were demolished in the 1997 fighting. Others construct houses illegally in parts of the city not zoned for residential housing. This illegal process means that many families do not have an adequate water supply or sewerage connections. Most people make their own illegal connections to electricity and so do not pay for the service, thus the electrical grid is under enormous strain coping with increased demand, and power is more often off than on everywhere!

Ninety nine per cent of people in Vlore are Albanian. Seventy per cent are Muslim, 20 per cent belong to the Orthodox church and 10 per cent are Roman Catholic. This does not account for the considerable number of evangelical Christians now in Vlore. There are few mosques in the villages, but Vlore is home to two large

mosques, a Catholic church and an Orthodox church. Some monasteries still exist.

Political situation

In 1990 the multi-party system was introduced in Albania and the first elections took place in March 1991. Vlore elected six Democratic Party (DP) parliamentarians. In the June and July 1997 elections, the collapse of the pyramid saving schemes changed public attitude to the DP and brought victory for the Socialist Party. Many tensions continue between the two in central and local government.

Security

After the riots of 1997, infighting gangs threatened public security. This improved in 1998 but a sense of insecurity remains due to random shootings and killings. The largest security threat to Vlore is illegal trafficking – for years speedboats have been used to smuggle arms, drugs, refugees and illegal migrants. This still continues.

Economy

During the early transition period Albania gained from adopting a market economy. But this rapid development was without

foundation. Vlore became an important economic centre. Importers brought in agricultural goods from Italy and Greece with no support for domestic production. Much of the underlying trade was through illegal trafficking. Once the pyramid schemes took root in the region, the prosperity they created gave the impression that Vlore could become wealthy without work, so necessary economic and structural reforms were never implemented. Vlore once supported large factories that produced caustic soda, soap, light bulbs, rice, and cement. A canning factory packaged sardines, peppers and pickled cucumbers. All these places now stand vacant and some have become the homes of squatters from surrounding villages.

Vlore is rich in mineral resources. During 50 years of Communism, the mine had been a useful resource – but is not in use now and privatisation is planned.

The region lacks much in the way of tourist infrastructure. There are a handful of privately run hotels offering about six to ten rooms apiece. Most of them have been built with dirty money. There is little of interest in the city to



Above:
Main
Hospital,
Vlore
Below:
Infection
Control
Unit

attract tourists. Three museums in the city are not tourist friendly. A few gift shops exist but there is little to attract shoppers.

Health care

Health care is provided via one general hospital with around 250 beds, a large health centre which is a day clinic and several small clinics dotted around the city providing some care for children and adults. There is one psychiatric unit. All these establishments are outdated and are a health risk. Apart from the Infection Control Unit,

rebuilt and refurbished by BMS in 1999, there are no modern facilities for health care.

Christianity

In all the towns in and around Vlore small churches still remain from its early Christian era. During 50 years of Communism all churches, monasteries and mosques were

closed or used as warehouses or museums. Enver Hoxha declared the country an atheistic state. Religion was banned and people were afraid to even mention God. When the country opened to the outside world in 1991, there were many among the older people who had remained Christian secretly. The younger generations knew nothing about the Christian faith and worship and none had heard the gospel or seen a Bible. Many in Vlore were among the first to become Christians in Albania.

Albanian Christians are keen to show a united front and have joined together in special events such as the March for Jesus and in special celebrations at Christmas and Easter – sometimes meeting together in

Vlore or Tirana.

1999 stands out as a historical year. Half a million or more Kosovo refugees flocked in to Albania, 40,000 of them to Vlore. Here Christians developed relationships with Kosovar families, provided them with shelter, and offered practical love and friendship such as they had never experienced before. The result was that during the crisis the churches filled with Kosovar families eager to hear about Jesus. When the refugees left, Christians from Vlore gave them parties, accompanied them back with provisions and some even today are helping the Kosovars build their homes, providing materials and helping to establish churches.

Profiles: Cilieta

Cilieta was born in Lakatund, a Muslim village seven miles out of Vlore. Like her brother and sisters she attended the village school until the age of 17. In 1994 Christians



visited her village and showed the 'Jesus film'. Cilieta believed and became a Christian, as did some other young people.

Young Christians from a group in Vlore visited the village on a regular basis for two years to teach and nurture these new Christians. Cilieta knows her Bible well and loves the Lord. Her friends have left Lakatund – some for training in Vlore, but she sees them from time to time. She would dearly love to attend the discipleship training school in Tirana but as the daughter in the house she is expected to remain at home and do the chores and care for her parents. This she does with a loving and cheerful heart and never complains; instead she trusts the Lord to direct her. On occasions the Christians in Vlore manage to persuade her parents to let her join them for a day or so. Otherwise the only fellowship she enjoys is listening to the Christian

radio broadcasts from Tirana. During the years of turmoil in Vlore and in 1999 during the Kosovo crisis, she was more or less isolated from other Christians – yet she remains faithful.

Altin

This year Altin will be 20 years-old. He suffered from cerebral palsy at birth and has since been disabled. His parents have given tender loving care to this boy all these years. There are no social services to provide any help. At an early age they could have put him in a home. His mother says if she had, Altin would never have survived. Altin has never walked

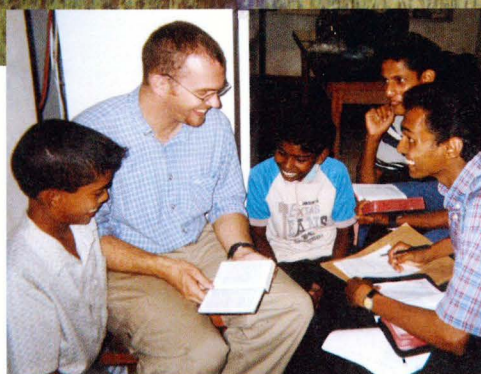


or been able to do anything for himself. Yet although all his muscles have wasted away and he is only skin and bone, his family, especially his mother, never tire of doing all they can for him. The family revolve around him. His three brothers work, play, do their school work and watch television with Altin in his little room. Visitors always gather round him. He loves company and if people spend time to talk and sing with him his face lights up with joy and he tries to join in the songs. He understands what is said but is unable to speak clearly. Altin's brothers read the Bible with him, he loves to look at pictures and gets excited when he hears how much Jesus loves him. For 18 years of his life his mother did the washing by hand day and night. Two years ago she was given a washing machine for which she never fails to thank God. ●

God sent me to

paradise island!

says **Nick Cady**



"I rate
my experience in
Sri Lanka
as the
best thing
I have ever done"



Sri Lanka certainly has produced in me the full gamut of emotions! I've been left speechless by maniacal drivers, challenged by the faith of other believers, overwhelmed by the hospitality and generosity of the people, and stunned by the variety of natural beauty in an island no bigger than Wales.

I had been working in the Civil Service in London for five years when an opportunity to take a year's unpaid leave came up. Having spent four years in my home church as the youth leader, I felt that the time was right to specifically dedicate a year's service to God. I think that he can guide us through our circumstances and the time seemed right to devote a year to his work.

I approached BMS to offer my talents. I had no idea where I might be sent. I confess to having had secret dreams about working on paradise islands, but when asked by the Volunteer Co-ordinator, 'have you anywhere particular in mind?', I bit my tongue and said that I wanted to work where there was a need. Of course God is generous – he sent me to one of his paradise islands!

I have come here as a teacher of English as a foreign language. My work is amongst the Baptists of Sri Lanka focused in two centres. Firstly, I work at

the Baptist theological college, the William Carey Institute, in the capital, Colombo. My students are all young church workers and the future leaders of the Baptist Church in Sri Lanka. These young people will benefit immensely from being able to access Christian resources in English. This is a long-term aim, and my contribution is just one. I also work with the young people at one of the poorer churches in Ratnapura. Here, the teaching is harder work, but the rewards are immense.

Although I came as a teacher of English, I knew that that was only part of my work here. God can use us everyday in such an amazing variety of ways. I have been invited to preach in a number of churches and have enjoyed friendship and fellowship with a large number of believers from very different walks of life. I know that I have been able to encourage others by affirming our unity in God, and I have been encouraged also to see the Lord's hand in the lives of so many here in Sri Lanka.

I rate my experience in Sri Lanka as the best thing I have ever done. When the Israelites wanted to acknowledge God's blessing in a special way, they built an altar in the place of the blessing. Were there not enough natural expressions of God's abundant grace in Sri Lanka, I'd be building an altar here! ●

Nick Cady is from Carshalton Beeches Baptist Church

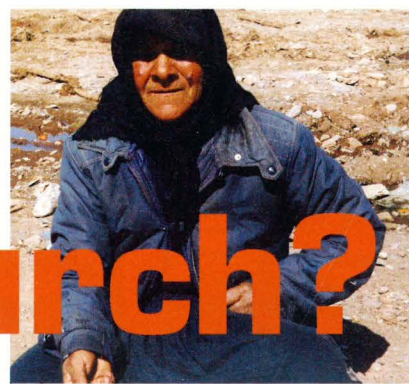
Top: En-route to a baptism service

Above: Nick at a Bible Study with young people from Ratnapura Church

Below: Agalawatta Baptist Church

to what lengths would you go to attend church?

ask the **Albania Action Team**



Imagine being stuck in a country the size of Wales, with very limited resources and opportunities for life. Assume you are one of the 70 per cent of the population who are unemployed here. How would you cope in the middle of winter without water or electricity for three days or more? How would you keep the kids clean, or warm? How would you feed them? What would you do if you saw your neighbour being beaten up by her husband in the street? How would you feel if you knew your teenage daughter could be kidnapped in broad daylight and sold into a life of prostitution in a foreign country without a trace? These are the harsh realities of life that many people in the country of Albania have to face. They are actual situations that we have sadly come across during our time here.

Albania is a nation in darkness, plagued with hopelessness and corruption. The police force, for instance, can barely keep cars driving on the right side of the road, let alone deal

striving for a better future for their families. They see no hope for Albania and the freedom from communism ten years ago has, in reality, brought self-destruction to much of the land.

Freedom from communism has, however, meant that doors have been opened to God. The churches here are still very young, but numbers are growing and this development has given us the opportunity to come and work

“Another lady was locked in her house by her father... she went and stole the keys and ran all the way to church”

with the Albanian people.

We were attending a prayer meeting in Bregu-i-Lumit, a village just outside the capital of Tirana, when two sisters arrived. They had been secret

Christians for five years but because their brother was against Christianity and one sister's husband was Muslim, they were not allowed to set foot inside a church. It was

because the brother and husband were both out that the sisters were able to secretly attend the prayer meeting. Another lady was locked in her house by her father, being told one Sunday morning that she could not go to church. She went and stole the keys and ran all the way to church.

These are just two examples but they answer the question, “How far would you go to attend church?” Albanians would go to any extreme to meet with God and other believers. What commitment! It makes you appreciate the small things in life, such as how free we are to attend church.

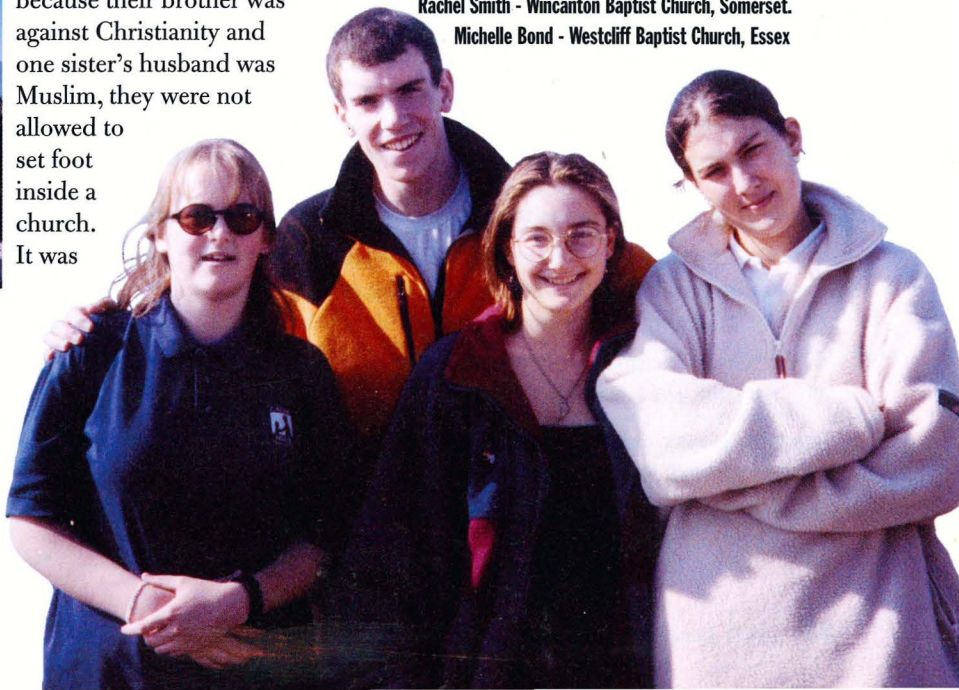
Leading children's and adults English classes, music lessons, youth meetings and making some visits to Albanian homes are just a few activities we have been involved with, but they have all been humbling experiences. None of us would have wanted to have spent the last six months anywhere else. The amount of love we have been shown as a team will stay with us for many years. A great experience. ●

The 1999/2000 Albania Action Team were (l to r):
Gemma Ding - Histon Baptist Church, Cambridge
Jonathan Lochhead - Deeside Christian Fellowship
Rachel Smith - Wincanton Baptist Church, Somerset
Michelle Bond - Westcliff Baptist Church, Essex



with the fact that 90 per cent of them are stolen. There is a constant threat of crime.

The immense poverty and despair has led people to the desperate but futile search for escape. It's not just selfish ambition – people are genuinely



take **2**

10 Ways to avoid becoming a Missionary

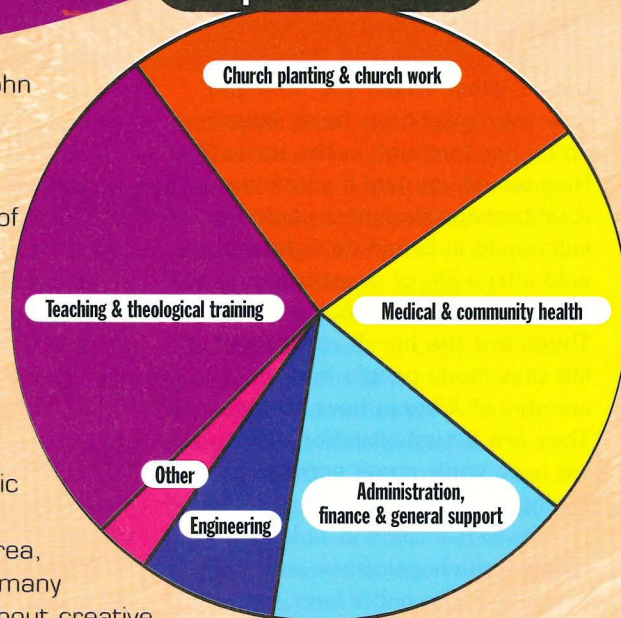
- ❶ Avoid being convicted. Skillfully avoid the command in John 4:35 to take a long hard look at the fields. This is not only depressing but it is unsettling, and could lead to genuine missionary concern.
- ❷ Have a good healthy (socially legitimate) target ahead of you, such as higher qualifications, promotion, bigger home, better car, higher salary or providing for the future.
- ❸ Get married as soon as possible so you can devote your life to the socially accepted norm of settling down, establishing a career and raising a family.
- ❹ Never expose yourself to personal contact with missionaries. Their testimonies are disturbing, and the situations they describe tend to contrast with the materialistic living of the Western world.
- ❺ Develop a closed-door mentality. Remember North Korea, Saudi Arabia, China and other closed countries. (Forget the many countries still open to missionaries and never listen to talk about creative access countries.)
- ❻ Always keep in mind your own past failures. It is unreasonable to expect you will ever be any better. This means never study the lives of Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, Peter or Mark, who were all drop-outs at one stage but didn't stay that way.
- ❼ Always look at missionaries as super-spiritual people with tremendous gifts and saintly characters. This will heighten your sense of inadequacy and remove any guilt complex about not being one of them.

Finally, if you do become a little concerned about missionary work:

- ❽ Listen to those who feel you are indispensable where you are, and that your local church can't do without you.
- ❾ Start worrying about money.
- ❿ Go out right away without any training. You'll soon be home again, but no one will be able to blame you for not trying!

From W Austin Gardner, a missionary with Macedonia World Baptist Missions, updated from a book by Stewart Dinnen, ("How are you doing?" Bromley: STL Books, 1984)

Role of BMS personnel

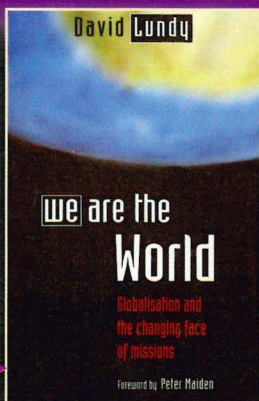


“We do not rely on the fact that 18 times more people go to church each Sunday in England than go to Premier and League Football matches on Saturday for our relevance. We are relevant because we are involved in people's pain, offering services from limited resources and providing hope to those who need it. Too often, good news is no news. There is an untold story of churches on the ground involved in the rough and tumble of human tragedies.”

Joel Edwards, General Director of EA UK

“By all means preach the gospel and sometimes use words” St Francis of Assisi

(Thanks to: CHRISTIAN DAILY NEWS)



Edited by
Adrian Hastings

Book Title: We are the world
Author: David Lundy
Publisher: OM Publishing
(ISBN 1-85078-342-X)
Reviewer: Nick Bradshaw, BMS Co-ordinator for
South & Central Wales
No of pages: 174
Price: £5.99

You could be forgiven for at times wondering whether this book was written for all involved in mission or as a handbook for Operation Mobilisation. Lundy leans heavily on his experience with OM and on the findings and continuing working out of the organisation's Corporate Review.

Examining the work done in the fields of leadership and management strategy and in the world of economics, Lundy reflects on this in terms of the world of missions. This I'm sure is a useful study but he was in danger of losing me here. A note I scribbled in the margin reads 'I thought I knew what globalisation meant until I read this'.

There is enough in the early chapters for those who want an introduction into the biblical background of division and unity. What forms of division still exist? The question is asked throughout the book examining how it applies to the issues that mission organisation structures face, such as nationals who work for western agencies with their western derived structures and values.

By Lundy's own confession part of the driving force behind the writing of this book was a desire to seek to bring greater balance to the relatively unchallenged trend of supporting national missionaries. He points out the many pitfalls, whilst upholding the belief that eventually nationals need to be fully self-supporting and themselves sending churches. He does seem to have in mind pastors and church planters in this argument, rather than educationalists, medics, engineers etc.

The world is changing; technology is making the world much smaller but it is still too big an assumption that we will all be used to one another's ways. We still think very differently. Lundy's last chapters focus in on this fact. If we are after true globalisation we are still a long way off. We are all of us still far too parochial. Read this book and prepare to be challenged to think through the issues facing mission today. ●

Book title: A World History of Christianity
Editor: Adrian Hastings
Publisher: Cassell
(ISBN 0-264-67499-5)
Reviewer: Revd Dr Anthony Thacker MA, Oadby
Baptist Church, Leics
No of pages: 594+xiv
Price: £16.99

This unique book is the ideal one-volume overview of world Christianity, a highly readable account, and a must for all interested in church history, theology and mission. The richness of the book comes with breadth and diversity, achieved without loss of depth.

Instead of European history with colonial add-ons, each continent's story is given its proper weight. However, it doesn't fully "escape the bounds of Eurocentricity and ecclesiocentricity": while American Frykenberg was born in India, but for one Australian and another American, all other authors are British.

Chapter one, the emergence of Christianity, is weakest, and would have been massively different if written by a Third World Pentecostal. It is highly interpretative with pose of bemused outsider. That Christianity emerged strongly because of faith in Jesus' resurrection is "odd." Instead, there's 'cognitive dissonance' at delay in Jesus' return, Christians' mutual support, plus the attraction of the bizarre and exotic – a very (modern) European spin.

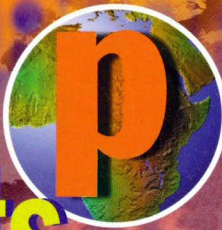
Other quibbles: Kant wrote 'Was ist Aufklärung?' in 1784; and the odd sequence means we read of later effects of Ultramontaniam before hearing how it arose.

Other early chapters offer most: Hastings' atmospheric account of church growth amid Roman persecution, imperial favour and collapse of Empire; Cunningham's insights into Orthodox Byzantium, enabling us to engage with John of Damascus and Gregory Palamas, not just Augustine and Aquinas; and especially Frykenberg on Thomas Christians from first century India and later fractured relations with Portuguese Catholics; also insights into Egyptian and Ethiopian Christian history; Catholicism through conquest in Latin America; Pacific missions; and the many ups and downs in China and Korea. The extraordinary tale of Japan's secret Christians is told all too briefly. This broad canvas helps put recent changes in context.

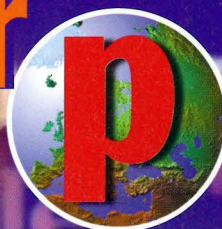
As for mission, we see how persuasion has fared in contrast to conquest, with for example the case in medieval northern and central Europe being rather happier than the Byzantine and Latin attempts to conquer Middle Eastern Christians. The same sad lesson comes in almost every continent. ●



projects



prayer



people

PROJECTS UPDATE



**Project: BMS
Birthday
Scheme
Share a smile**



For many of us birthdays are a happy and joyful occasion with parties and presents, a special time of fun, laughter and celebration with friends and family.

But, sadly, for many others across the world, a birthday only counts as just another day – a struggle to survive, a desperate search for food or place to sleep, just another day living in pain and suffering.

Giving to the BMS Birthday Scheme on your birthday enables you to make a difference in the lives of others. A donation made through the Scheme will support BMS medical and community health development work, helping to bring a healthier life to people in some of the poorest places in the world. Your gift might just give a reason for somebody else to smile on their birthday.

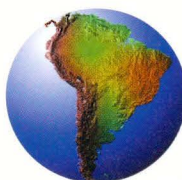
We've just produced new publicity for the BMS Birthday Scheme, for you to use, if you would like to involve others. There's also a wider range of birthday card designs, to suit all tastes!

For more information contact the BMS Birthday Scheme Secretary in your church, or tick the relevant box on the coupon on page 35.

PRAYER FOCUS






Margaret Swires: Natal, Brazil

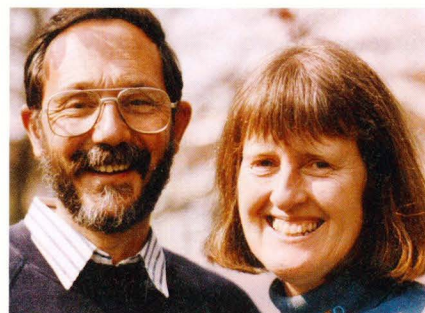


Margaret is a church community worker involved in supporting a number of different churches and their outreach initiatives. Many people in Natal live in extreme poverty with little chance of education or hope for the future. The First Baptist Church of Natal runs a scheme called the Friends of the Community Project, aimed at meeting some of the basic needs of the local people. One new initiative is the 'nutrition house' which offers help to around 30 malnourished children, aged between six months and three years, living in the favela (shanty town). Some areas of Natal have up to 90 per cent illiteracy and 20 to 40 per cent is common. In an effort to combat this, Margaret has followed in the footsteps of BMS colleague Maria Dyer by completing an adult literacy course. Together they hope to promote this course and get local people trained up to teach others.

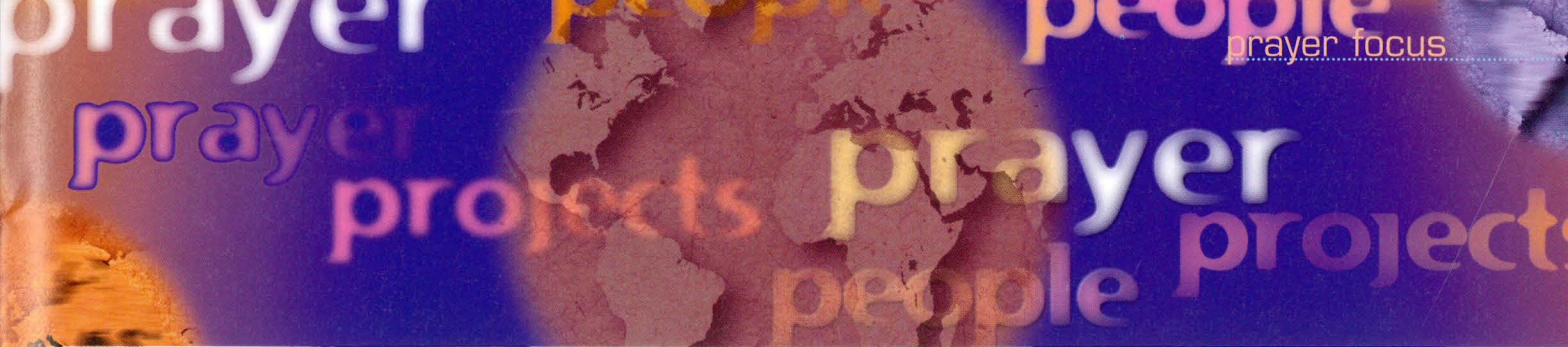
Please pray:

-  For ongoing supplies to keep the nutrition house running
-  That plans to help some of the many illiterate people in the area will come to fruition
-  For wisdom for Margaret in knowing how best to support the churches and local people she works with, and for the churches themselves in knowing what outreach schemes to run

**Ryder and Heather Rogers:
Bregu-i-Lumit, Albania**



Ryder and Heather are church workers in the village of Bregu-i-Lumit, just outside Tirana. They have been very encouraged by conversations with local people about Jesus and the Christian faith whilst performing door-to-door visits. Most people in Albania are nominally Muslim and within families the women are often forced to stay at home, their lives controlled by male family members. Heather and two other women from the church visited Aurela, a young woman who was at home alone with her baby daughter. By the time the three had shared their stories of faith



with her, Aurela was eager to welcome Jesus as her saviour. "Maybe you would like to think things through and we'll come back a few days later," they said. "No," she replied, "I want to give my life to Jesus now." So she did just that. Two weeks later, after other Christians had visited her, Heather returned to Aurela's home. The great grandmother was sick and expected to die so Heather went to see if she could pray for her. Aurela was there, joining in the prayer, her face radiant. "Stay a bit longer and say some more," she said. Aurela is one of many in Bregu-i-Lumit who may never be allowed by their family to go to church but are living the life of Jesus in their own homes. They need all the visits and encouragement from fellow Christians they can get.

Please pray:

- 1** Give thanks to God that he is reaching into the lives of people in Bregu-i-Lumit, despite the cultural difficulties
- 2** For wisdom amongst Bregu's Christians in knowing how to support people like Aurela without causing conflict within families
- 3** For strength and health for Ryder and Heather

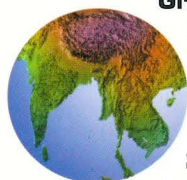


overseas because they do not perceive it as 'real' mission. "I'm just so glad BMS is a bit more forward thinking and does send teachers whenever possible," she says. Another problem is that KISC's Principal was not granted a new visa and so was unable to return to Nepal from home assignment. Grace has agreed to take up the post and begins her new role in August. KISC's Principal is not the only person to have not had his visa renewed – many people who have faithfully served in Nepal for many years are feeling a huge sense of loss and disorientation as they are forced to rethink their futures.

Please pray:

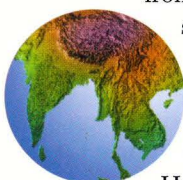
- 1** For Grace as she lays aside the Geography teaching she loves so much and takes on the extra responsibilities of Principal. Pray God would give her confidence and wisdom for this new role
- 2** For those unable to continue working in Nepal, that God would guide each to a new role

**Grace Penney:
Kathmandu, Nepal**



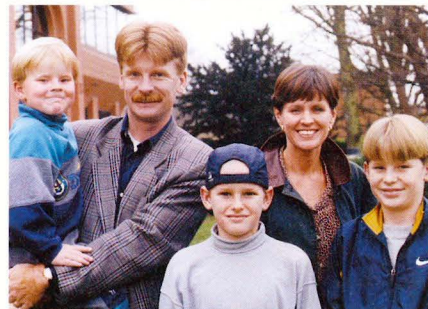
Grace has been a geography teacher at the Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) for six years. The staffing situation at KISC is quite difficult at the moment. Grace says that many of KISC's partner missions do not consider it a priority to send teachers

**Iain and Karen Gordon:
Kathmandu, Nepal**



The Gordon family recently returned from Nepal after almost seven years of service there. The timing was perfect in many ways as Iain has been working with the Khimti I Hydropower Project and just before their return to the UK, he

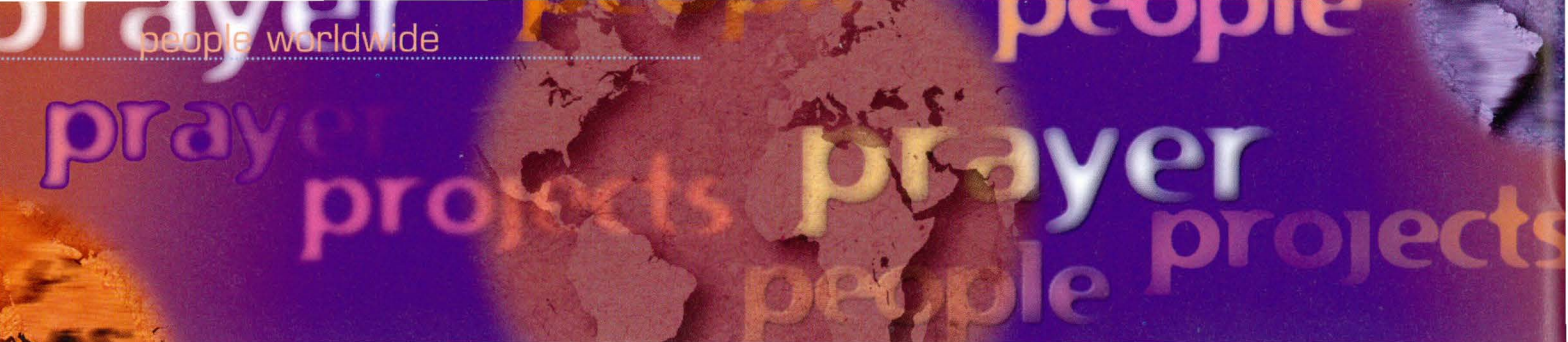
was able to see the first power supplied to the national grid from that project. Iain is now almost completely recovered from his medical emergency of last year when he was rushed to hospital in Singapore with complications following a back operation. Karen says, "He has no back pain though still has a numb area in his lower leg and foot. That may or may not go with time. Medically, though on paper there should have been ongoing difficulties, Iain has no remaining problems at all. Even now doctors and other friends are amazed at the fact.



But then, on paper, Iain shouldn't be with us at all... new life, granted by the grace of God, many prayers and superb medical treatment." Following Iain's illness, Karen has decided she would like to do a return to nursing course and the couple are in discussions with BMS about their future.

Please pray:

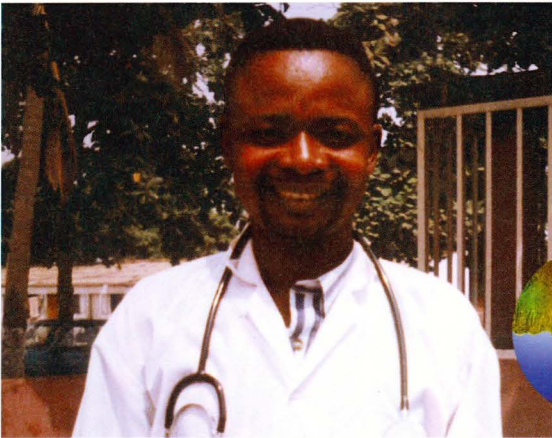
- 1** Give thanks for the Khimti I Hydropower Project and pray that it will enter full commercial production on schedule in July
- 2** Give thanks for Iain's miraculous recovery and restoration to his family
- 3** Pray for God's guidance as Iain and Karen seek his will for their future roles



Below: Pedro Marques, Luanda, Angola
Opposite: Children in Luanda

BMS personnel introduce some friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



Pedro Marques, Luanda, Angola

Pedro is one of the nurses who works alongside me at the Baptist Church's health centre in Luanda. He was born in the countryside in the north of Angola, but grew up in Zaire as one of the thousands of BaKongo refugees who fled the Angolan war of independence and the ensuing civil war. Pedro qualified as a nurse before returning to Angola in 1990. Since then, he has undertaken further studies in Uganda and Kenya to specialise in community health. He joined the church's health team in 1997. Married to Maria, Pedro is 35 years old and has three children aged seven, five and two. To help make ends meet, Maria works at Luanda's biggest market five days a week where she is one of over 3,000 stall holders. The family live in a simple concrete-block house which has three bedrooms, a living room and a

kitchen. Like most families in Luanda, they currently have several relatives staying with them as the war situation means that it is too dangerous to stay out in the provinces. There were 13 in total at the last count, with Pedro and Maria sleeping in one bedroom, the other men and boys in the second one, and the women and girls in the third. It is a tight squeeze but in Angolan culture it would be unthinkable to turn relatives away. Both of Pedro's grandfathers were amongst the first Angolan Baptist ministers, and Pedro himself became a Christian in 1982. He serves as a deacon in his local church. It is also a pleasure to work alongside Pedro as he is invariably cheerful. Despite walking with a limp because of the painful arthritis that has afflicted him for many years, he is always ready with a smile and a word of

encouragement. When asked how he manages to do this, he replies, "We may have many problems, but we can overcome them because we have Jesus. Knowing him is the most important thing." Pedro has a keen mind, speaking an incredible 14 languages. He currently attends night school five times a week to learn computing and would like to have the opportunity to take a Masters degree in Development Studies. He says that God has given him the desire to return to the provinces as a community health worker, teaching villagers basic health and hygiene. Pedro longs to see a lasting peace in Angola and sees the importance of preparing himself to play his part in the future rebuilding of his land. From Simon Collins, BMS medical worker in Angola





People Wanted

Could this be you?

Physiotherapist

Nepal (INF)

Needed to help in the Physiotherapy Department of the Western Regional Hospital. Opportunities also for teaching trainees from other hospitals and taking part in the National Physiotherapy Training Programme under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training. Qualifications required: Qualified physiotherapist with two years experience in medical, surgical and orthopaedic physiotherapy.

Ministers

Albania

Ministers or ministerial couples needed for general church work. Many new exciting opportunities for church planting; discipling new Christians; identifying and working with future church leaders. To work within cities, towns or rural settings. Each minister, after completing language and orientation, would be working on his/her own but would be part of an overall ministry team working within the country. Opportunities for both experienced and recently qualified ministers.

GP Trainer

North Africa

Christian development organisation seeks experienced GP trainer to work with the government health services to develop the quality of GP performance and in-service training in a North African context. The job will also include supporting the development of the local church.

Senior Accountant

Nepal (UMN)

Experienced financial manager required with a recognised professional qualification, eg Chartered Account, Certified Public Accountant or equivalent. The position involves wide responsibilities including the UMN accounting systems (computerised and manual) and financial management.

Primary/Pre-school Teachers

Nepal (UMN)

Experienced professional teachers are needed for small groups of five to eleven year old missionary children of several nationalities. Required to teach all subjects at primary/elementary level, in English.

General Director

North Africa

Christian development organisation is seeking to appoint a General Director to lead an international team engaged in various development activities. Appointment will be in early 2001 for an initial five year term. Fluency in French preferred, but time for language acquisition will be given.

Lebanon

Experienced pre-school teacher required to teach in English language in Baptist school in Beirut.

This is only a very small selection of the kind of vacancies we have available at any one time. Our 'People Wanted' list is changing all the time. Please contact us, and ask if we have anything for you. See page 35.

New personnel

Justine Horsfall

No stranger to BMS, Justine was a member of the 1998/99 Albania Action Team and also led the Task Force Team that supported Kosovan refugees in Albania in the summer of 1999. Justine is a member of Scapegoat Hill Baptist Church, Huddersfield. Following a period of training and cultural studies at IMC, Birmingham, she is expected to undertake administration and church work in Kosovo.



Elizabeth Dickinson

Beth, a member of Ivy Cottage Evangelical Church, Manchester, is a nurse,



currently working at Christie Hospital, Manchester. It is hoped she will use her nursing skills in Bangladesh, working with an emphasis on community health care, mother and child welfare and family planning as well as more general out-patient type clinic work. Beth is expected to begin a period of training at IMC, on 1 September.

Alison Burge

A member of Longfleet Baptist Church, Poole, Dorset, Alison is a staff nurse, currently working in the Intensive and Coronary Care Units at Poole General Hospital. It is likely she will work in Nepal.



Andrea and Ian Froment

Andrea and Ian are both members of Owton Manor Baptist Church, Hartlepool. They have two children aged four and nine months. Ian and Andrea have been accepted for service subject to a suitable location being found that specifically matches their gifts.



Baptist House News

Welcome to:

Sarah Baker

Sarah is supporting the growing number of BMS volunteers as Volunteer Programme Administrator. Prior to this she worked as a teacher of Religious Studies and has spent short periods of time overseas in missionary service. She is passionate about anything to do with Latin America and says, "if anyone likes a peculiar Argentine drink called Mate, let me know!"

Liz Russell

Liz joins us on 1 August as Regional Secretary for Asia, initially based in the UK. Previously Liz was South and East Asia Regional Manager with the Church Mission Society. She studied English Literature at Aberdeen University and has worked in China with the Amity Foundation.

Janet Quarry

Janet has taken over the role of Manager for Mission Personnel, succeeding Joy Knapman who retired in April. Previously Janet was the Career Personnel Co-ordinator for Latin Link where she worked for six years.

Pam Robinson

Pam has joined the Finance and Administration team as

secretary, having previously worked at Morland Brewery. Her newest hobby is gardening which she says she is still learning. Pam attends a church in Abingdon.

Farewell to Joy Knapman

Joy first went to Calcutta as a BMS

missionary in 1960. She spent 19 years in India, mostly in the BMS Calcutta office. She returned to the UK in 1979 and started a new career as a social worker, returning to work with BMS as Regional Representative for Asia in 1988. Based in Sri Lanka, she travelled many thousands of miles. In 1998 Joy returned to the UK to take up the post of Director for Missionaries, then stood aside from that a year later in the new Department for World Mission when she became Manager for Mission Personnel. At the final General Committee meeting she attended, Joy thanked everyone for "the privilege of being able to serve with BMS." She added, "India will always have a special place in my heart and I am grateful for all I've been the privilege of doing."



BMS
world mission

news

BMS Relief Fund Grants

- Venezuela** £1,260
Flood relief
- Ingushetia** £42,000
Weekly food parcels for 2,500 families in refugee camps
- Chechnya** £6,800
Emergency aid within the city of Grozny
- Orissa** £11,300
To part fund a community health project after the cyclone of October 1999
- Mozambique** £35,000
Further grant for relief food and medicines for those affected by the flooding.



Contacting John Smith

John Smith, Co-ordinator for Central and Eastern England, has moved to: 9 Hollidays Road, Bluntisham, Huntingdon, PE28 3LP, Tel 01487 741003. His email address remains the same at jsmith@bms.org.uk

Signs and Blunders

What a difference a few letters make!

The congregation found it hard not to smile during a sermon which had as its theme "Os Caminhos de Deus", "The Ways of God". What the missionary actually repeated during the entire message was "Os Caminhões de Deus", "The Lorries of God."

One BMS missionary gave an earnest lecture to his students on "The Pact (pacto) of the Baptist churches". Unfortunately what he actually said was "The Duck (pato) of the Baptist churches."

Then there was one missionary, who was a little deaf, who told me after a church meeting he had returned from, that a member had been excluded from the church for hitting a nun (freira). Finding this hard to believe, I enquired later of one of the church members, who explained to me that the member had been excluded for getting into a fight in the market (feira).

From Derek Punchard, BMS Regional Secretary for Latin America & the Caribbean

"I have just told a taxi driver that I am 'el meseeha', instead of 'meseehy', that is not a Christian, but rather the Messiah. He didn't bat an eye!"

From Gordon McBain, BMS worker in North Africa

Church Notice in Nepal

"As a number of shoes have gone missing from outside the church in recent weeks, you are advised, if your shoes are expensive, to bring a bag, put the shoes into the bag, and bring them inside the church during the service."

From David and Cath McLellan. David is BMS Manager for Mission Partnerships, and formerly with BMS in Nepal.

"After only two weeks in Albania, with no language, I went into a shop to buy some meat. Seeing something wrapped, right quantity and recognisable, I pointed to the package. The shopkeeper picked it up, I nodded, and he put it back on the shelf. I pointed again and the same thing happened. After the third time I leaned over, grabbed it from his hand and offered my money. He looked slightly puzzled but shrugged his shoulders. Funny foreigner, I could see him thinking. Relating this afterwards, I learned that nodding meant 'no' and shaking meant 'yes'. It takes a little getting used to."

From Gill Jones, former BMS worker in Albania

Check Out July/August 2000

July 2000

Arrivals

Ann and David MacFarlane from Barletta, Italy
Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
John Mellor from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
Chris and Geoff Bland from Bangkok, Thailand
Philip and Rosemary Halliday from Massy, France

Departures

None

August 2000

Arrivals

John and Valerie Furnage from Paraná, Brazil

Departures

Ann and Gordon McBain to North Africa
Sarah Hall to North Africa
Sylvie Bonsor to North Africa
Philip and Rosemary Halliday to Massy, France
Mark and Suzana Greenwood to Fortaleza, Brazil

world mission link



Mission in the Millennium

A 'Mission in the Millennium' exhibition was held at North Road Baptist Church, Milford Haven earlier this year. BMS Co-ordinator, Nick Bradshaw, spoke on the work of a Missionary Secretary and BMS worker, Gwen Hunter, was guest speaker. BMS Volunteers in Kosovo, Clem and Elaine Mason, and Peter and Valerie Harwood, personnel working in Nepal, were also interviewed. £157 was sent to BMS as a result of this day. Well done!

Congratulations Muriel!

Muriel Iredale has been a great fan of the BMS Birthday Scheme for as long as she can remember, and she is now well in her 90s.

She was recently presented with a BMS Certificate for her service to the BMS Birthday Scheme as Birthday Scheme Secretary by John Allen, the minister of her church (Lockwood Road Baptist Church, Huddersfield) along with Margaret Harper, Leader of the Young Church and Molly Stell, Church Treasurer.

Muriel was first a BMS Birthday Scheme Secretary at Rehoboth Chapel, which then later merged with Lockwood Road Baptist Church. She attended Rehoboth with her parents, and has served the Lord in various ways in her life including Sunday school teaching, and supporting missionary work.

Today she is mostly housebound, but still has a prayer ministry within her home, in which she prays regularly for missionaries.

If you would like to know more about the BMS Birthday Scheme, please fill in the coupon on page 35.



Women's Missionary Auxiliary Wales Annual Bilingual Conference

Pantycelyn Hall, Aberystwyth
5 - 8 September 2000

Theme:

Changing Times - Unchanging Mission

Cost: £92

Registration Forms from
Mrs Pauline J Edwards, 8 Ynyswerdd, Penllergaer,
Swansea, SA4 1AR
Tel 01792 893477

March On!

Centenary Baptist Church, March, Cambridgeshire, used the opportunity of their 300th anniversary celebrations to raise money and awareness for BMS.

March Baptist Church are also celebrating in that members Alan and Megan Barker, along with their children Carl, Rhys and Gemma will soon be going to work in Nepal with BMS. They say: "Though we are sad to lose such valuable workers here at Centenary, we know that our treasure is in their willingness to go and do God's will for them."



mb magazine

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keep to yourself

The other front line

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- ☐ **Nepal**
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- ☐ **Caroline & Tim Trimble**
- so that I can pray for their part in making Jesus known worldwide.**

GOING

- ☐ I would like to find out more about:
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- ☐ **other long-term vacancies**
- ☐ **being a BMS Volunteer**
- ☐ **overseas Action Teams** (Year Teams)
- ☐ **UK Year Action Teams**
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A man with a grey beard and a blue shirt is holding a historical black and white photograph. The photograph shows two men in hats and light-colored shirts standing outdoors, with a third person sitting in the foreground. The man holding the photo is looking directly at the camera.

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mission in a changing world

looking
forward to
today's
challenge

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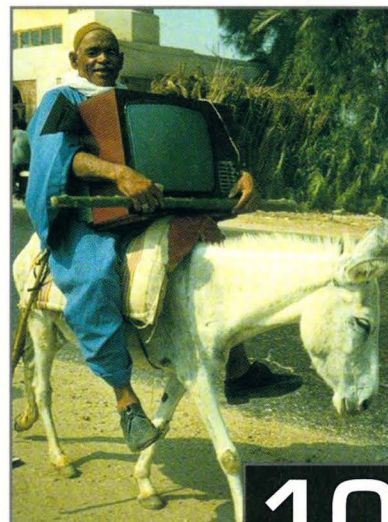
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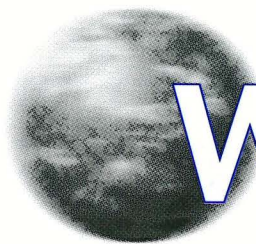
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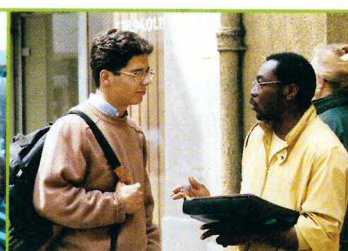
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mh





WORLD



Agencies such as the International Mission Board from America have 40 workers in France. Their spokesman, Dwayne Hastings, said the French proposal was not surprising. But he believed the Bible commanded believers to share their faith. "The Bible is explicit in its command that we should seek to share the gospel with everyone. Evangelism and witnessing are actions generated out of love and concern, not hostility

NEWS



or hatred. It is clearly not an exercise that should be regulated by the state."

Currently BMS World Mission has four couples working in France. It seems unlikely they have been included in the list. BMS Regional Secretary for Europe, Andrew North, commented, "France is a secular country, but its government defends freedom of religion and freedom of speech. We work in France legally and the French Federation has given us permission to be there."

(Baptist Press)

India Christians plead for attacks to stop

Prominent Indian advocates of human rights and religious freedom and Christian members of India's Parliament have accused political leaders of failing to guarantee the rule of law for social and religious minorities and have demanded that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government take immediate steps to stop attacks on Christians.

Attacks on Christian targets in several parts of India have assumed epidemic proportions. India's Christians are shocked and anxious not only over violence directed against them and against church buildings, but also by the frequent support given by politicians to perpetrators of the violence.

Well over 100 attacks

have been recorded in the last couple of years including Dalits being burned to death, nuns and priests attacked and sometimes murdered, and attacks on churches. Members of the Bajrang Dal group, the militant wing of the ruling BJP, attacked a group of Christians in Andhra Pradesh and burned biblical literature in Agra, alleging that the Christians were trying to "convert villagers (by) offering them money."

In May a girls' school was attacked during an annual Christian conference. The head of the school said, "About 120 Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad activists, brandishing sticks and pipes, forcibly entered our premises at around 11pm... and went on the rampage. They pelted stones, broke tube lights and attacked the peaceful gathering."

In June Christian leaders appealed for the help of the United Nations and human



PA NEWS

news in brief ● news in brief ● news in brief ● news in brief

Norway

When an Oslo district council gave the World Islamic Mission permission to sound the call to prayers every Friday, Christians joined in the loud battle. Loudspeakers outside 18 mosques broadcast calls of "God is great" to the city's 36,000 Muslims. The Norwegian Heathen Society then received permission to broadcast "God does not exist. The flames of hell have gone out." The competing calls provoked Christians, who then broadcast "Jesus lives. He is the way, the truth and the life" from rooftops. (CDN)

Malawi

Catholic bishops have protested to the Minister of Education about a proposed reform that would force schools – even Catholic and Protestant ones – to teach the Koran and traditional African religions, abolishing 'Bible knowledge'. This appears to be a step in the plan to 'Islamise' the country. After the Church's protest, President Bakili Muluzi withdrew the reform, but it is believed to be only temporarily suspended. (CDN)

Bulgaria

Bulgarian Baptists are now celebrating the signing of a contract between the Mayor of Sofia, the capital city, and European Baptist General Secretary, Theo Angelov, which legalises the ownership of a plot of land. It has taken eight years, three mayors, court challenges, parliamentary debates, broken promises and many prayers. The property on the land will be used as an orphanage, a theological school and a small manufacturing workshop for training orphans in a skill. (BWA)

England

Organisers of the Prayerwatch outreach in Arnold, Nottingham have reported a ten per cent drop in crime over two years, against national trends. Prayerwatch was started by police officer, Alan Stuart, and gained widespread support among churches. Police ask for prayer for specific incidents, but withhold the names of those involved. Christians have prayed both in church services and at home about incidents of theft, vandalism and taunting old people. (CDN)

Australia

A project run by the Mothers' Union and the Bible Society in Australia, which began in 1996 has now seen 54,000 new mothers presented with a copy of Luke's Gospel. Mothers are presented in hospital with a copy of 'Born for you', which includes Luke's Gospel in a readable format. "The mission of the MU is to reach the homes of the nation for Christ," said Jan Livingstone, its national president. "We distribute the gospel to people of all religious and cultural backgrounds." (CDN)

rights groups in the wake of murders of the clergy and bombings of churches. "We are scared. We have to go to international organisations because we have no faith in the Indian government", said Herod Malik, head of the United Forum of Catholics and Protestants of West Bengal.

Senior government officials deny any bias against Christians. A senior ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Christian community had nothing to fear and the government was taking steps to prevent such attacks.

(CDN)

Chechnya Grozny receives Baptist aid

"We went out to the streets to distribute food and the people stormed to us!" That was the experience of Sandor Szenczy, Director of Hungarian Baptist Aid (HBAid) when he accompanied Grozny

Baptists now living in Ingushetia on a trip back to Grozny. The Chechen Baptists were distributing relief supplies in this ruined city through their ministry, Mission Vera. Apart from a small group of Polish doctors who work in Grozny Hospital, they were the first to give direct aid distribution to the local population.

Reporting on his visit, Szenczy said, "Right now Grozny is not appropriate for normal living. There is no electricity, gas, food or medicine. Nobody can worry about the dead under the ruins. The danger of an epidemic is great. The army is able to keep the order more or less during the day but hell breaks loose after nightfall. Murder, violence, kidnappings, decapitations and torture are happening all the time.

"We went out to the streets to distribute food. The people stormed to us in spite of the pouring rain. It was barely possible to keep the order. Because of the hysterical reactions of the old, shaggy, physically and emotionally exhausted people we had to work in the noise of insane shouting.

"We met two old Baptist sisters as well. When they heard that we were going to a Lord's Supper service in the ruins of the Grozny Baptist church they started crying and came with us. The church was there, in ruins, everything stolen and burnt.

"We read the Word of God, broke the bread and drank the wine remembering the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Bullets, metal pieces from rockets covered the floor, a gas mask in the mud, destruction and decay everywhere... We held each others hands and just wept."

The BMS Relief Fund has given grants this year of nearly £49,000 for food parcels and emergency aid in Grozny, channelled via HBAid. (EBPS)

Cuba Christianity growing

Controlled by decades of persecution, Cuba's churches have been growing steadily in the last decade, and especially in the last 12 months.



Religious leaders are attributing the sea change to last summer's government-approved evangelical celebrations, which created freedom. Hundreds of thousands of Christians participated in four celebrations, including one in Revolution Square attended by Fidel Castro and his Cabinet members. The increased tolerance of Christianity by the government has made people more willing to embrace the faith, although some persecution continues, said Dick Nicholson, Latin America director for the Assemblies of God.

Cuban Christians acknowledge that evangelicals are preaching openly, and that the message of Christ is being taken to homes, hospitals, prisons and schools. It is reported that one church in Havana has added 8,000 members to its cell groups in a year.

The government's openness is limited. "They have opened the door, but are very guarded. They are watching churches very closely," Nicholson said.

Christians still experience persecution and discrimination. Pastors are reported to be harassed, threatened by police and forbidden to buy homes or cars. Churches are subject to unannounced searches, and literature, printers and fax machines can be confiscated.

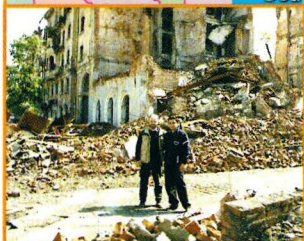
A Havana Baptist church was closed at Easter.



PA NEWS

Authorities told members that they would face fines or contempt of court if they did not comply with the closure – no reason was given. The church has now split into five housegroups and will continue to worship.

Since 1990 the Church in Cuba has experienced a greater level of acceptance by the government. In 1992 the constitution was amended prohibiting discrimination against Christians in Cuban society. Cuba observed Christmas as a public holiday in 1998 for the first time in 40 years and allowed the first outdoor religious meetings when the Pope visited in



BWA



PA NEWS

1999. Baptist leaders from all around the world met here in July for the first Baptist World Alliance General Council to be held in Cuba. Baptists make up the largest number of Protestants in Cuba with 35,000 members.

(Religion Today)

Indonesia BMS helps refugees from fighting



BMS has made a Relief Fund grant of £18,000 to help with refugees, who are mostly Christians, fleeing the fighting between Muslim and Christian groups. Muslim extremists in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, have formed paramilitary groups, calling themselves jihad or 'holy war' fighters to attack Christians.

Violence erupted again in early June in Sulawesi when hundreds of residents attacked the village of Malei and torched and destroyed dozens of houses. Yunan Lampase, an official at the central Sulawesi governor's office said, "More than 7,000 fleeing residents are now being sheltered at the soccer field in Palu." (Palu is the provincial capital.)

Later in June, about 160 people – 152 Christians and eight Muslims – were killed when militant Muslim extremists attacked the village of Duma on the remote Indonesian island of Halmahera.

Christians started to flee Halmahera in overcrowded boats. An official news agency reported that a ship carrying around 270 people sank in Indonesia. The 270 were all refugees from Duma. A separate report gave the figure as 450 to 500 people on the sunken ferry, among them 100 Baptists, including eight pastors, four delegates to the Baptist Congress, and Samuel Andreas, a BMS-funded student and his parents. Andreas had gone to his parents' home in Halmahera to collect them to take them to the Congress.

The state governor of north Sulawesi reported that they are currently caring for about 250 refugees from other parts of Indonesia, mostly Halmahera. BMS partner in Indonesia, the KGBI, is also caring for many who are spread around churches and families.

Of the £18,000 relief grant, about 15 per cent will be used by the KGBI to buy food and clothing for refugees they are accommodating. The remaining 85 per cent will be given through KGBI for use in association with the state governor for people from all groups who have fled there. (CDN)

Rwanda Churches help child-led households

So many families in Rwanda are headed up by children because of war and

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

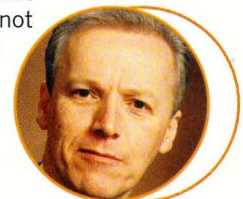
I remember taking this photograph. It was in Orissa last autumn, not long after dreadful cyclones wiped out tens of thousands as killer winds and waves ravaged India's poorest state. Many survivors stood near, helpless. Everything they owned – little that it was – had been destroyed. Many were bereaved. And here were these children, wide-eyed at a visitor in their remote village. I took their picture, wondering what future they were facing, glad we'd been able to bring them some immediate aid in their dire circumstances.

It's ironic and (in the true sense) pathetic that the tousle-haired lass is wearing a Titanic tee shirt, symbol of a ship of death. The child lives in rural India but she's wearing an icon of a Hollywood blockbuster film.

Everywhere I go I see global brands. Perhaps it's Coca Cola seemingly with factories in every land on earth. Maybe it's a McDonald's restaurant in Ukraine. There's a dubbed version of Ally McBeal in Germany. In Pakistan I avoid the cinema showing a Urdu voice-over of Mr Bean. Of course my local Tesco has plenty of foods from Africa or Asia, so there's east to west drift too.

Values are changing, especially in the have-not part of the world. The west's materialism is scorned simultaneously with a desperate longing for its glamour and goods. It's changing local traditions. It's also changing what people look for from westerners. Pumped full of ideas of western prosperity and the promotion of self, many don't or can't hear a message of a Jesus who scorned wealth, made himself poor and humbled himself to die for others. Sacrifice, discipline, and looking beyond this life aren't attractive concepts for a materialistic-hungry generation which wants its reward now.

What'll make the world notice? Only when Christians really have other values, really rank heaven above earth. And when they really care, really put others first. And when Jesus is really seen in lives which don't beat to the world's tune. But I'm not sure that's happening enough among us. I'm not sure that's happening enough with me. And if it doesn't...? Then, while a few may be saved from our Titanic, I fear the fate of most. ●



Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS

AIDS that churches are now spearheading relief programmes, arranging food, shelter, education and moral support.

An estimated 85,000 Rwandan households are headed up by children, according to Rwanda's

National AIDS Control Programme, with 60,000 children orphaned by AIDS last year alone. The government estimates that orphans head 90 per cent of Rwanda's poorest households, family units that typically include four or five children.



A 1999 United Nations report noted that, "most of these children live on the edge of subsistence without regular meals, adequate clothing or acceptable housing. Some have been chased from the homes of their dead parents by neighbours or members of extended families."

A survey of households headed up by children conducted by Save the

Children found that nearly three-quarters were headed up by a girl, and only 15 per cent had some sort of regular income.

Churches now are running orphanages and primary and secondary schools to care for these orphans. Nationwide the churches have also produced a step-by-step manual to help those caring for family members with AIDS, written especially for children aged ten to 12, with simple language, photos and diagrams.

"Leaders now realise that they must make every effort to fight this global pandemic," said Jean Ndahayo, a lay counsellor with the Baptist Union in Cyangugu, Rwanda. "If the church sleeps instead of attacking the problem, it will become nothing but an empty building with all its people lost." (Newsroom)



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Vinoth Ramachandra

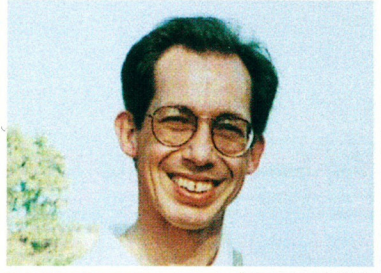
New missionary challenges

It has often been noted that the 'centre of gravity' of the Church has shifted this century to the countries of the South. With this shift has come a transformation in missionary profiles. Evangelism has reverted to the 'laity', as it was from the beginnings of the Christian movement. For instance, immigrant Filipino housemaids 'gossip the gospel' with their rich mistresses in the feudal states of the Persian Gulf. Sudanese and Chadean Christians take the gospel as refugees into 'unreached' parts of North Africa and beyond. Russian university students were enthusiastically evangelised by African room mates in the pre-Glasnost era. Korean pastors work in Brazilian slums. Hispanic, African and Asian ethnic churches are found in the heart of decaying inner city areas in Europe and North America. In the past two decades, hundreds of university graduates in India have crossed socio-economic barriers to serve, in the name of Christ, as health workers, teachers, engineers, or agricultural advisors to marginalised and under-privileged peoples across that great subcontinent.

But we dare not be complacent. Much of the numerical growth in the South is superficial. Large churches seem to have little impact on the surrounding culture and nation. Countries which boast staggering rates of church growth do not seem to be more humane and just than those in which the Church is quite negligible. In many countries the Church is small, in some non-existent. Christians are often deeply divided, not only theologically but across ethnic, and cultural barriers. How has the call to discipleship become separated from the preaching of the gospel? And Christian unity from witness to the world? And has the call to 'go' as a missionary obscured the more fundamental calling to 'be' a missionary in the everyday context in which God has placed us? ●

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia
Regional Secretary of IFES





Lee Bray's diary

LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Continuing the extracts from his diary.

Tuesday 2

Today we fly on to Thailand. As we board the plane, everything is suddenly comfort and smart sophistication. We get a pre-booked taxi to take us to the Christian Guest House in the city. We check in, then stroll out to find somewhere to eat. After the repression of Muslim Bangladesh the anything-goes Buddhist culture of Thailand slaps us in the face. We find the nearest decent looking restaurant and dive in. The food is good.

Wednesday 3

The whole day is given to travel. Finally met by Angus and Carol MacNeill and driven to their home.

Thursday 4

Woken at 6am by dawn chorus. We set off early for the River Kwai Christian Hospital to take part in the morning service. We collect a few passengers en route, until the car is brimful. A small boy sits on my lap - still, silent and poorly. At Huey Malai the hospital has been relocated from its original site beneath the waters of a reservoir. We visit the under-5s clinic where babies are being weighed, measured, checked - organised pandemonium.



Friday 5

Today promises to be a real highlight of our trip - we are travelling to Pilokkhi village, only accessible by boat and/or on foot. We have little idea of what to expect, but Carol says it is one of her favourite places. After a couple of hours drive we arrive near the shores of a vast, man-made lake where we are met by four local pastors who will travel with us to join in the weekend of teaching and seminars. Together we make our way down to the water's edge and clamber into a long narrow boat. Before getting into the boat, according to Thai custom, we remove our shoes. At the other side, one-and-a-half hours later, there is a welcome party to meet us. They have a small two-wheeled tractor and cart to carry our bags. It is only two or three km to Pilokkhi, but in the heat it takes us another hour and a half to walk the distance. Our bags get there more quickly, accompanied by the tractor driver and a group of excited, laughing children. Pilokkhi rises up the hill from the waterside. Pastor David and his wife, Lady, have left their home in Sangklaburi to come and plant a church here. That church is now the centre of community life in the village. David and Lady's home is charming. We are served a fine meal - meat, pumpkin, noodles, rice - seated on the floor around a low circular table. In Thailand we are given cutlery but no chairs. In Bangladesh there were chairs but no cutlery! Above us there is a small fluorescent light connected to a small car battery!

That evening there is a service in the church building. It is positively western in design, almost Lutheran. It has a tower and inside are a raised platform with pulpit, rows of chairs and a gallery. (More surprising are the electric lights, ceiling fans, PA system, and overhead projector. Where does the electricity come from? There are no power lines to be seen.) First of all the children come to the front and sing. They are utterly charming, and I am completely won over by them. Then it is the turn of the choir, before Angus and Carol begin the weekend's teaching. After an hour or two we walk back to the house beneath a canopy of brilliant stars. No wonder this is one of Carol's favourite places.

To be continued next issue



Nothing stands

says BMS General Director **Alistair Brown**

everything is new and nothing is new. William Carey would see today's world very out of focus through his 18th century spectacles. Yet the work of mission, telling people about Jesus and healing and helping hurt and exploited people, would be more than a little familiar.

Outwardly much is different about 21st century mission. What's changed?

The way we see the world

Look at the opening verse of this 1861 children's mission hymn:

I love my happy home,
On Britain's favour'd shore;
And if, in thought, I roam,
I love it more and more.
I see how Providence has smiled,
In making me an English child.

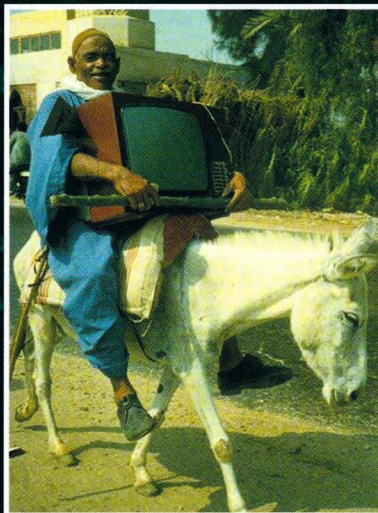
On it goes giving thanks for our blessings. Here's verse 3:

No cruel rites are found,
Nor blood-stained altars here;
No savage yells resound,
To fill our hearts with fear.
Abroad, at home, in work or play,
We are secure by night and day.

The world-view of the writer is that *we* are Christian and civilised; *they* are heathen barbarians. Today, we hold firmly to the world's need of knowing Jesus, but we wouldn't assume a Christian Britain nor our culture so superior.

Globalisation

What's the world's most watched TV programme? Answer: Bay Watch. An Indian writer pleaded sympathy for the village woman who now found her husband comparing her with Pamela Anderson. How could she



compete in his imagination with a Californian beach beauty?

Mission today happens in a global village. In Angola a high number of the young men in the church I visited wore football shirts with the names and colours of Arsenal or Manchester United. In a poor area of India a youngster sported a Titanic tee-shirt. (See the picture on page 7). No previous generation of missionaries has faced a world so aware of global issues, so concerned about image and style, so ready to reject presentations which smack of being outmoded or irrelevant.

Resistance to missionaries

At least two reasons make missionaries unwelcome in many countries today. Colonialisation brought the colonialists' faith, usually Christianity. Reject colonialism and you reject most things associated with it including those who still bring that faith. Add to that the rise of fundamentalism and a kind of religious totalitarianism and there's no room for people propagating another faith.

Rapidity of change

I can't buy an up-to-date map or atlas. Not many now refer to the



USSR, but plenty still reckon Zaire covers a major part of central Africa.

The world spins ever faster. No-one is a master of detail for everywhere or even of anywhere for long. Missionaries used to expect little change from when they arrived to when they left 30 years later. Now they can't.

Shorter-term mission

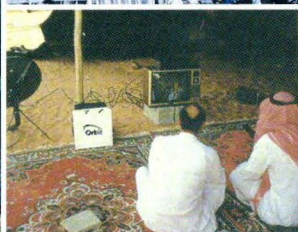
Few today stay anywhere for decades. Some agencies reckon their average length of missionary service is now under five years. BMS is a bit longer, but not much. These days few parents are willing for long separations from children so education needs bring them home. And many see mission work as part of their career rather than their career. Moving around, switching locations and work are all part of a modern lifestyle, and missionaries aren't different. In recruitment terms, BMS has to run fast even to stand still.

Fast response

Back in 1792, when BMS began, news of a hurricane or earthquake would take at least six weeks to reach Britain. The critical period was long

still

Far left: Portable TV!
(Photo courtesy of Sat-7)
Left: McDonald's in Sri Lanka.
Below left: Street scene, Nepal.
Below right: Satellite dishes, Albania.
Below middle: Bedouin watch TV.
(Photo courtesy of Sat-7)
Bottom: Statue of Buddha in Sri Lanka.
Right: Cigarette advertising, Sri Lanka.



makes mission possible even when there's no strong local church.

A moving target

Only three per cent of the world's mission force works among unreached peoples, perhaps the most shocking statistic in Christendom. Why so few? Because mission agencies tend to work where they've always worked. BMS always had a better statistic, but recently we've made decisions to reposition our work and people into the neediest areas of the world. That's difficult and discomforting but it takes BMS back to its pioneering roots, and now we have a presence in some of the most inaccessible countries for the gospel in places like south-central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. And it means we can invest in opportunities like the SAT-7 satellite TV broadcasting of Christian programmes across a wide spread of Mediterranean and western Asia countries. Millions now have satellite dishes and they're attracted to good programming.

It's all new. And yet it's only new on the surface. Underneath mission hasn't changed. It's still about people, still about caring, still about sacrifice, still about making Jesus known to every man, woman and child in God's world. That's our business. We do a 1st century task in a 21st century context and with 21st century tools. Mission has a changing face, but the heart beats the same steady rhythm of love for a lost world. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director
of BMS World Mission



past before anyone here knew, and help would have taken months to arrive. Now we hear of disasters within minutes. And sometimes we can provide help only a few hours later. A fast moving world facilitates fast response. We can get money to local contacts to buy aid. We've even begun to send emergency teams to troubled areas as we did when Kosovo refugees were pouring over the border into Albania. That couldn't have happened without fast communication and fast travel, every day realities of the 21st century.

New partnerships

I'm often amazed that people ask me if BMS works with other groups overseas. When didn't we? Especially for the last half century, partnership has been a given of mission societies, sharing decisions and resourcing local personnel. But there are new features. Some partnerships aren't as effective as they should be. One answer has been for like-minded mission agencies to form umbrella organisations to oversee work in a country. That's high level and effective co-operation, and

"Work...while it is day"

BMS signs a partnership to work in a new country

Whilst in general terms North Africa and the Middle East are hard areas to work in, there is one country in this region that is still open to Christianity and Christian workers – Lebanon.

In April this year BMS World Mission signed a partnership agreement with Lebanese Baptists, and already, BMS is sending its first volunteer workers to this country.

Lebanon has just over three million people, 60 per cent of whom are Muslim and 40 per cent Christian. There are 21 Baptist churches there with a total of 2,000 members. There is no political pressure for the government to increase the number of Muslims. The Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in May has made some born into the 'Christian' sector jittery and a few have fled to Israel for safety; but the long-term impact on the Middle East peace process – and the situation in Lebanon in particular – is what is giving most people cause for concern.

The Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD), under the executive directorship of Nabil Costa, is responsible for proclaiming the Christian message through the various properties it owns. These properties include the Beirut Baptist School, the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS), and an office block with a publications department.

Nabil Costa was previously a marketing manager for Eastman Kodak in the Gulf area, but he gave up this job to run the operations of LSESD. When first approached, he said, "I prayed about it, and found life was too short." So he accepted the change of role.

ABTS is 40 years old, and is having to turn away students because it does not have enough space to accommodate them. Following a fundraising appeal in Britain and Europe it will start to build an extension, adding an additional two storeys to the existing two floors. This will allow the number of students they can take to double from the present 50 to 100. Lebanon is the only Arab country where a seminary can operate. Students come

from all over the Arab world eg from Morocco, Iraq, Tunisia and Sudan. One of the Sudanese students is a bishop in the Sudanese Anglican church. In addition to Bachelor level courses, students can enrol for a two-month course to learn about Islam; this is especially geared towards those who will work in Islamic areas.

The Baptist school in Beirut has 1,100 students aged up to 12. It is situated in the Muslim area of the city, and only 50 of the pupils are Christian; the rest are Muslim. It was originally set up by American Baptists, and today still has the reputation of giving a first-class education, which is why Muslim parents send their children there. It also has highly skilled and motivated teachers, combined with low tuition fees. Nabil Costa commented, "It is our intention not to make money, but to honour Jesus."

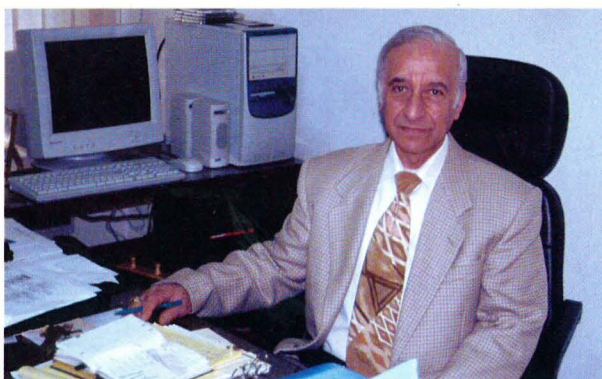
Nabil admits that church planting is a new concept for Lebanese Baptists, but now that the war is over, it is one they are working hard to embrace. Lebanese Baptists are using both the Seminary and the school to proclaim the gospel.

He said, "We have a window of opportunity, and we should take advantage of it. We have to work hard while we can. We don't know how long we will have the freedom we have now." ●

Left: Elias Bitar, principal of Baptist School, Beirut

Right: Nabil Costa

Below: The Baptist School in Beirut





Seven instead of one

A new way of doing mission

ten thousand pounds does not go far in supporting mission personnel. It will pay the living expenses for one couple overseas for six months or will provide half a landrover for BMS workers in a country like Angola.

But in Indonesia that amount of money pays for the support of seven national BMS personnel, and there's enough left over to support three students at theological seminary! BMS has been working in partnership with the Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia (KGBI), that is, the Convention of Indonesian Baptists, since 1992.

It's a different way of 'doing mission', but how much more cost effective! Instead of training one person or couple in the UK, taking them through learning the language and adapting to the new culture, for the same amount of money here we have seven committed Baptist Christians who already are fully acquainted with the language and the culture, and are raring to go. Six of the seven missionaries work on the island of Sumatra – the fifth largest island in the world, over double the size of Britain.



There's Samuji who lives and works in Bandur Lampung. Someone has described him as 'treasure in jars of clay'; he is a man with endless stamina and energy. The situation in Lampung Province is very tense at the moment between Muslims and Christians. Christians have to observe a night-time curfew, and many have received death threats.



Ariston, who is the newest of the missionaries, and is being mentored by Samuji. He and his wife live in Kotabumi.

They have a house with a very large room which would be ideal for Christian worship, but their landlord is adamant that they will be thrown out the minute the house is used for Christian worship.



Yosia and his wife live and work in Medan, a city of 2.4 million in the north of Sumatra. They pastor a church, which regularly has

20 adults and 60-plus children attending. Yosia also teaches in the Medan Bible School.



Juliannus is involved in a church planting work in Kabanjahe. In a short space of time the church has grown from 0 to 30.

Juliannus loves people and spends a lot of time making contacts, particularly through the many local coffee shops around the church.



Onekesi has also worked in the Kabanjahe fellowship, but has also started a cell-group of 40-plus people which meets

in the slums of Medan two to three times a week. He originally came from the island of Nias, and his work is amongst migrant workers from Nias.



Walben and his wife, Grace, also work in a church in Medan. Church growth for him, too, has also gone from 0 to 30 during his time in the city. Their church meets in new premises on the main road out of Medan.



Lastly, there's Youbert Warou, who is Mission Co-ordinator for the KGBI. He is based in Manado on the island

of Sulawesi and oversees and co-ordinates the work of the KGBI not just in Sumatra, but also in the Maluku Islands and Kalimantan.

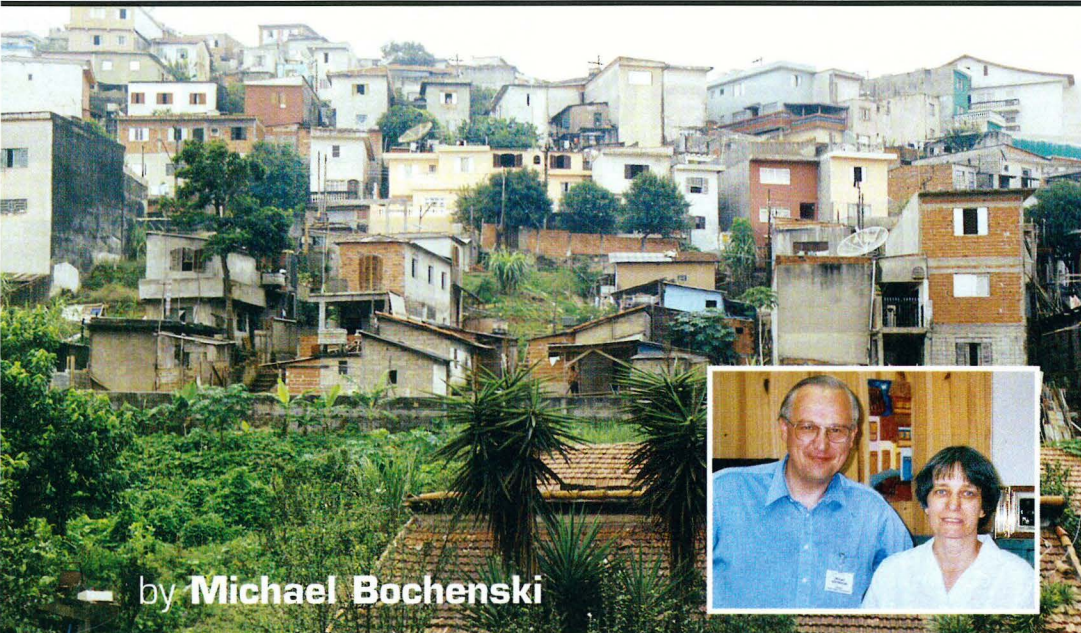
As in other parts of the world, there is a sense that this door of opportunity for Christians to be able to work openly in Indonesia may not be open for long. For Indonesian Christians, too, the words of John 9:4 are very timely:

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no-one can work."

The recent conflicts between Muslims and Christians have highlighted this. ●



a personal **encounter** with the work of BMS



by **Michael Bochenski**

my wife Jane and I visited Brazil in September 1999 during my year as President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB). BMS Regional Secretary Derek Punchard organised an excellent programme for us and we are grateful to him and to the BMS and the BUGB for making it possible.

The changing face of mission was evident wherever we travelled. At the historic March 2000 meeting of the BMS General Committee, the same was true there too. The imaginative new logo and mission statement were introduced on that occasion. BMS World Mission is committed to 'sharing life in all its fullness with the world's people by enabling them to know Christ; alleviating suffering and injustice and improving the quality of life'. We saw this in practice in Brazil throughout our visit.

Enabling them to know Christ

We experienced this in:

- the favela team ministry Stuart and Georgie Christine had helped to build in São Paulo
- meeting Pele's wife, Assyria, a patron of the favela ministry, and hearing of her family's commitment to evangelism
- speaking at the seminaries in Curitiba and Fortaleza where men and women, often young, were training for

present and future leadership – usually in the evenings after a long day's work

- hearing of the goodwill legacy from recent BMS Action Team visits
- preparations for the ecumenical 'Curitiba para Cristo' mission with preacher, Nelson Fanini
- preaching in full churches, morning and evening
- the community church Mike and Daveen Wilson have loved and prayed into life in Trapiá, deep in the Brazilian interior
- Andy and Linda Eaves' church planting ministry in the picturesque setting of Baturité
- an evangelistic church retreat organised by Mark Greenwood on the weekend of his daughter Ana's birth!
- an inspirational woman pastor-led baptismal service in Fortaleza

Alleviating suffering and injustice

We witnessed this in:

- the commitment of BMS missionaries to favela ministry in situations of grinding poverty within São Paulo and Fortaleza
- Devanir Carrasco's ministry in Heliópolis, one of the best established favela churches
- an orphanage in Curitiba
- the faith community in Trapiá where work and worship, witness and social action have come so creatively together



Far left: São Paulo favelas.
Inset: Michael and Jane.
Centre left: Jane in Heliopolis, São Paulo.
Left: Parque Selecta Baptist Church, São Paulo.
Above left: Teaching at pre-school in favela.
Above right: Penha favela.

- in a social action project the Eaves had helped to develop during their time in Fortaleza, including beautifully crafted cards marketed through BMS and other outlets
- in a conversation with a base community priest who had worked with Bishop Dom Helder Camara as he spoke with us of the liberation movement's past, present and future

Improving the quality of life

This was evident in:

- life skills taught to pre-school children, from numbers to using toothbrushes
- courses in computer training and new technology
- health and hygiene policies
- literacy classes and a community library
- the provision of basic health care and advice
- employment initiatives
- 'free' English lessons
- quality seminary education

Most good mission happens nowadays in partnership with national Unions and Conventions. BMS World Mission's partnership with the Brazilian Baptist Convention was evident wherever we travelled. Indeed, over the course of this decade and subject to appropriate re-evaluation, our BMS missionaries will probably be leaving Brazil in the next few years. The changing face of mission involves beginnings and endings, transition and sometimes pain. We were privileged to glimpse something of the living history of this during our time in Brazil.

BMS has been in this vast country since 1953, enabling people to know Christ; alleviating suffering and injustice and improving the quality of life. We thank God for them and as we know from many comments during our visit, so do the Brazilian Baptists. ●

Michael Bochenski was President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1999-2000

Making disciples the British way!

Hands up who believes in a blue-eyed, blond Jesus? Nobody? Thank goodness for that! You would have thought that Jesus was definitely British, or at worst, European, if you had attended the display of art through the centuries at the exhibition, 'Seeing Salvation' at the National Gallery. Magnificent it may have been, but it did tell the sad story of how "British" forms of Christianity have invaded the world.

Our mandate to 'go into all the world' has not changed – unfortunately in the past we have sought to 'make disciples' in the image of British Christianity with British cultural thought forms and traditions as part of the package. We are now reaping the side effects of this world-wide religious domination as more and more people are discovering a vibrant, living and relevant faith which is being creatively expressed through their own cultural forms discarding any attachments to the older style missionary movement to which they owed so much.

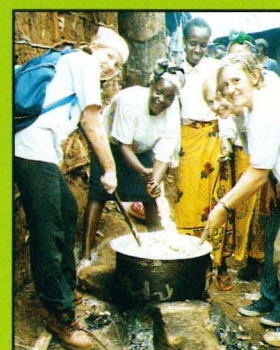
Friends visiting Zambia recently were puzzled by how divorced from their own culture were the local Christian communities. Then they discovered that Western missionaries had told the people that it was evil to dance. That is much more to do with Western Christian culture than biblical teaching!

The way we do mission is radically changing but there are major issues to be grappled with. The old hymn language of 'terrestrial orbs', 'angel strains' and the classic 'heavenly lay' does not work in Camden or Calcutta, Birmingham or Bombay. And the recent fashion to take the gospel message down to the lowest common denominator to make it inclusive and tolerant of any approach is a huge blunder and a travesty of the truth. Equally, making the requirement for church membership and participation so strict that we build hurdles far too high for anybody to jump is also putting us on a course for annihilation!

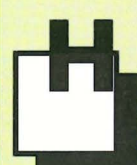
Mrs 'X', who complained after a recent service I preached at that it was not a gospel service, 'and we always have a gospel service in the evenings', hadn't quite grasped the fact that there were rarely any non-Christians in church – probably because of Mrs 'X'!

Loving relationships, a caring community, relevant lifestyles, not compromising on issues of justice and faith and a readiness to walk into unknown territory with a gospel loosed from the shackles of British imperialism – these are some of the ingredients which make for successful mission in today's world. ●

Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions



steve



Mission in a moral vacuum

Paul Towlson gives a lesson from Albania

how do you go about building the church in a society that lacks moral foundations? This is a question quite pertinent to the challenge of mission in a post-communist country like Albania. Albania is the only country to have ever declared itself to be officially atheist, a country in which religion was almost totally eradicated. The result is a society that operates on the basis of unashamed and usually short-sighted self-interest, a society in which corruption is normal practice.

Part of the excitement of working in a country such as Albania is that out of this background many people – especially young people – have come to Christ. Churches have been planted in towns and villages throughout a land that was once totally closed to the gospel. Already Albanian believers have been recognised as leaders and have been trained for Christian ministry.

All of this is encouraging and exciting. But it is only the beginning. Conversion brings new life, a new orientation, a change in lifestyle. Together with this, however, there is a huge amount of baggage that the new convert brings into his or her new life in Christ. The social and moral background of the new Christian has an immense influence over the way they think and behave. This is especially so in Albanian culture in which individualism is an alien concept and the family network is all encompassing. Even when an individual decides to follow Christ, the social context remains an incredibly powerful influence.

Those of us that have had the privilege of training some of the emerging Albanian church leaders have

also struggled with the level of moral and social maturity that we have encountered. Sometimes we have reflected that some of the patterns of behaviour seen in the context of a school to train Christian leaders would be entirely out of place in seminaries in other parts of the world. Are these then the wrong people that are being trained? Are they unspiritual and unsuited to Christian ministry? I believe very firmly that the answer to these questions is “No”.

How then do we go about building the church in this kind of context? How do we go about the task of training national leaders? Recognising the need to reach unchurched people, the vocabulary and practice of church planting has come into vogue. No doubt there is a need for more churches, that within every locality there is a living witness to Christ. But is there a more effective metaphor for the challenge of mission in a moral vacuum?

When we turn to the words of Christ recorded by Matthew at the giving of the Great Commission, there is a surprise that awaits us. There is no mention of programmes of evangelism or of church planting. Instead there is a command to “go

and make disciples”, initiating them into the life of the new community through baptism, and teaching obedience to the commands of Christ.

Could it be that these words of Jesus are the key to the way we do mission in a moral vacuum? If so, then there are a number of implications for mission strategy.

Firstly, we invest in individuals. Discipleship takes place in a relationship that takes time. This is where our Western culture and evangelical heritage conspire to put all the emphasis on conversion rather than on the investment into someone’s life through the costly process of discipling.

Secondly, we think much longer term. The church in Albania is a first generation church, which means that there are no established patterns of Christian behaviour. There are no mature role models for new believers other than the missionaries who come from a foreign culture. The task of working out what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in a new context is a lengthy and difficult task.

Thirdly, we work in community. Often, missionaries are rugged individualists, but this can never be an excuse for not attempting to

“There are no mature role models for new believers other than the missionaries who come from a foreign culture. The task of working out what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in a new context is a lengthy and difficult task.”

"This means persisting with new believers, even when they let us down"

demonstrate the reality of Christian community! One of the particular challenges for discipling in the Albanian context is the social and cultural pressure on individual believers. These strong relationships should not be cut off, but they do need to be counteracted by the persistent fellowship and example of a Christian community.

Fourthly and finally, we remember the gospel. The gospel is a message of grace, of free forgiveness, of unconditional acceptance, and of the second and third chance. In a culture that has been so damaged by its historical experience, the message of grace is vital. This means persisting with new believers, even when they let us down, even when they discredit the call to discipleship. It also means that we hold open the possibility that we too are mistaken in what we do and in what we expect in a culture that is foreign to our own.

Perhaps these comments are relevant too, to mission at home, in a society that is also characterised by moral and spiritual confusion, a society in which the church faces an increasing challenge of being a different kind of community. ●

Paul Towison worked in Albania with BMS from 1995 - 1999



New Horizons

Ethnic cleansing has opened the door for work in Kosovo

two years ago hardly anyone had heard of it: Kosovo – a nominally Muslim province north-east of Albania with nearly two million people, who enjoyed a reasonably high standard of living. It had no Christian witness to speak of.

The peace of Kosovo was shattered when ethnic cleansing resulted in hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes, escaping into Albania.

Some months later those who had fled returned to the ashes of their homes, to try to rebuild their lives emotionally and practically. Some families had lost all their menfolk – fathers, husbands and sons – they were taken forcibly by the Serbs, some to be killed, some to be imprisoned in inhumane conditions, and others were just missing – whereabouts and fate unknown.

At the time of the crisis Geni Begu, General Secretary of the Albanian Evangelical Alliance said, “The crisis situation in Kosovo is a mission field for the Albanian church. Since January 1998 the Albanian church has adopted Kosovo as another country to pray for. We as a church have been praying for Kosovo, but have never had the opportunity to go to them. Now the Lord is using this situation and has brought them to us. Now is the time the Lord has opened the doors for Kosovo. Of course, our goal is not to take advantage of their situation. We recognise we can show them the gospel by serving, by caring for them, by listening to them, by living the gospel in front of their eyes.”

Last July BMS sent a volunteer response team of 15 people to Albania, to help rebuild lives, four of whom went to Kosovo.

One of these volunteers, Phil Chant from Kingsbridge Baptist Church, Devon, made a return visit to the town of Gjakova in Kosovo earlier this year.

When he left Kosovo, last July, a church had already begun to meet in one of the local schools under the leadership of Gary and Kathy Opfer, independent missionaries.

Within a few weeks numbers had reached several hundred. Some

came out of gratitude for the food they had received; others only came once or twice, but all would have had the opportunity to hear the gospel.

When winter came numbers dropped off; it was a particularly harsh winter – temperatures down to -28°C, water supplies frozen, only occasional electricity, and not uncommon for three feet of snow to fall in two days.

By spring the numbers at the embryonic church had settled down, and they now get a regular attendance of 80 to 90 people, including 15 to 20 children. They have 15 people waiting for baptism. Sundays are used as a time for sharing and encouragement and opportunity for all who come to hear the gospel. In addition to those attending the Sunday service there are 30 to 40 children in Sunday school, and 50 to 60 older kids who go to a youth service at 1.00pm. Every Sunday there's also an evening prayer meeting in the park for the families of prisoners, followed by a church prayer time to which 20 to 25 people come.

Midweek there's a Bible study night, which has a higher emphasis on teaching for Christians. It's held in the Solid Rock café, a youth outreach, originally established by YWAM. Although Gary and Kathy are leading the church at the moment, their hope is to train nationals to take over the leadership.

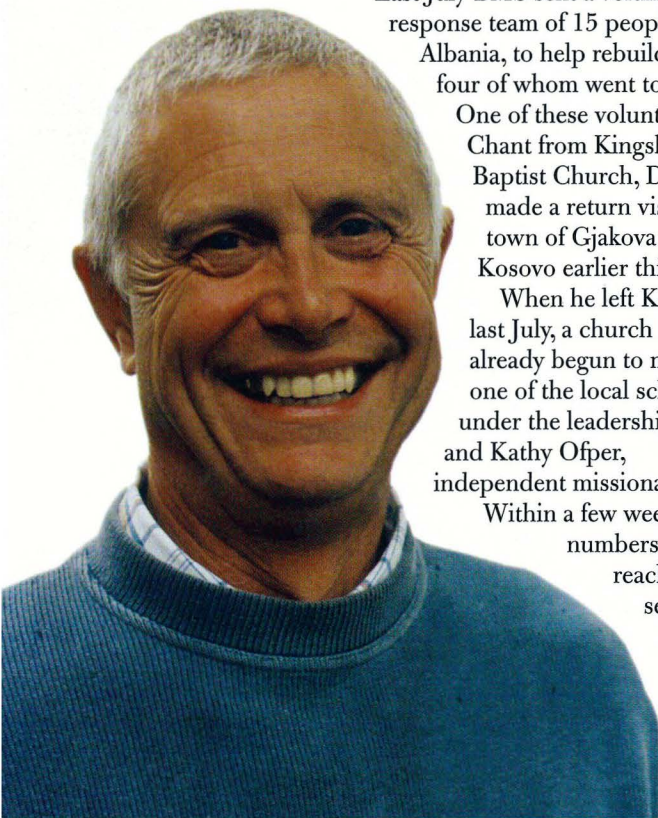
Phil Chant used his latest time in Kosovo to visit local people, church members and families of prisoners and missing men, listening to their stories, trying to share their sorrows, praying and caring for them. He visited with Faton, who acted as translator, a potential leader of this young church. Previously no one had any idea exactly who was coming to church or who had been visited. They were able to start keeping some records.

Phil said, “It's now just over a year since the end of the war. People are living with terrible hurt in their lives, and there is a great need for forgiveness and reconciliation, which are only truly possible through Jesus.”

Many mission agencies have now left Kosovo; the aid is reducing, and with it the obvious scope to share the love of Jesus with ordinary people. When other agencies have gone BMS World Mission will still be in Kosovo, using the opportunities that have opened up. BMS Volunteers Clem and Elaine Mason are currently in Pristina, Kosovo, working with Love in Action, and at the beginning of 2001 BMS will be sending Justine Horsfall to Kosovo. Justine will help with administration in the Love in Action office. A former Albania Action Team member and leader of the Albania volunteer response team, Justine will be BMS's first long-term worker in Kosovo. ●

Left: Phil Chant.

Right: Kosovar refugees with (inset) Kosovo church meetings.





Budapest

A series edited by **Jan Kendall** that looks at towns and cities around the world where BMS personnel are working by **Jenny Smith**



History

The capital of Hungary, Budapest, straddles a curve in the River Danube. The Romans built a settlement called Aquincum here around the first and second centuries AD, which flourished as the regional capital for the Roman province of Pannonia. The Roman legion was stationed at Aquincum and guarded the north-eastern frontier of the Empire. The Roman aqueduct and amphitheatres can still be seen today just north of Óbuda.

In the fifth century the city was taken over first by Goths, then Huns, who also settled on the Pest side of the Danube.

The tribe of Magyars took over the whole country in about 900 AD, and terrorised Europe with raids as far as France and Italy, until they converted to Roman Catholicism in the late tenth century. Hungary's first king and patron saint, Stephen I, was crowned on Christmas Day in 1000, marking the foundation of the Hungarian State.

Originally there were three separate cities; Buda, Óbuda, and Pest. They were under Turkish rule from 1526 to 1686, as was the rest of Hungary, but were never fully integrated into the Ottoman Empire.

In a revolution in 1848, the first Hungarian government chose Pest for its seat.

In 1849 Budapest officially became one town, and the capital of Hungary. Unification finally happened in 1873.

After the First World War the Treaty of Trianon (1920) reduced Hungary's area by more than half, but Budapest received 325,000 refugees from ceded areas and thus expanded.

It was occupied by German troops in 1944, heavily bombed, and under siege for six weeks. Three-quarters of Budapest's buildings were damaged or destroyed.

Hungary was liberated from the Nazis by the Soviets in 1945, and was a Soviet bloc country till 1989.

During the Soviet occupation



there was a brief revolution in 1956, when Budapest citizens held out against the Russian troops for several days, but it was finally quashed, after much bloodshed. At this time many people left the country. As a result there are more Hungarians living outside Hungary today than within its borders.

Following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Hungary has developed close political and economic relations with western Europe.

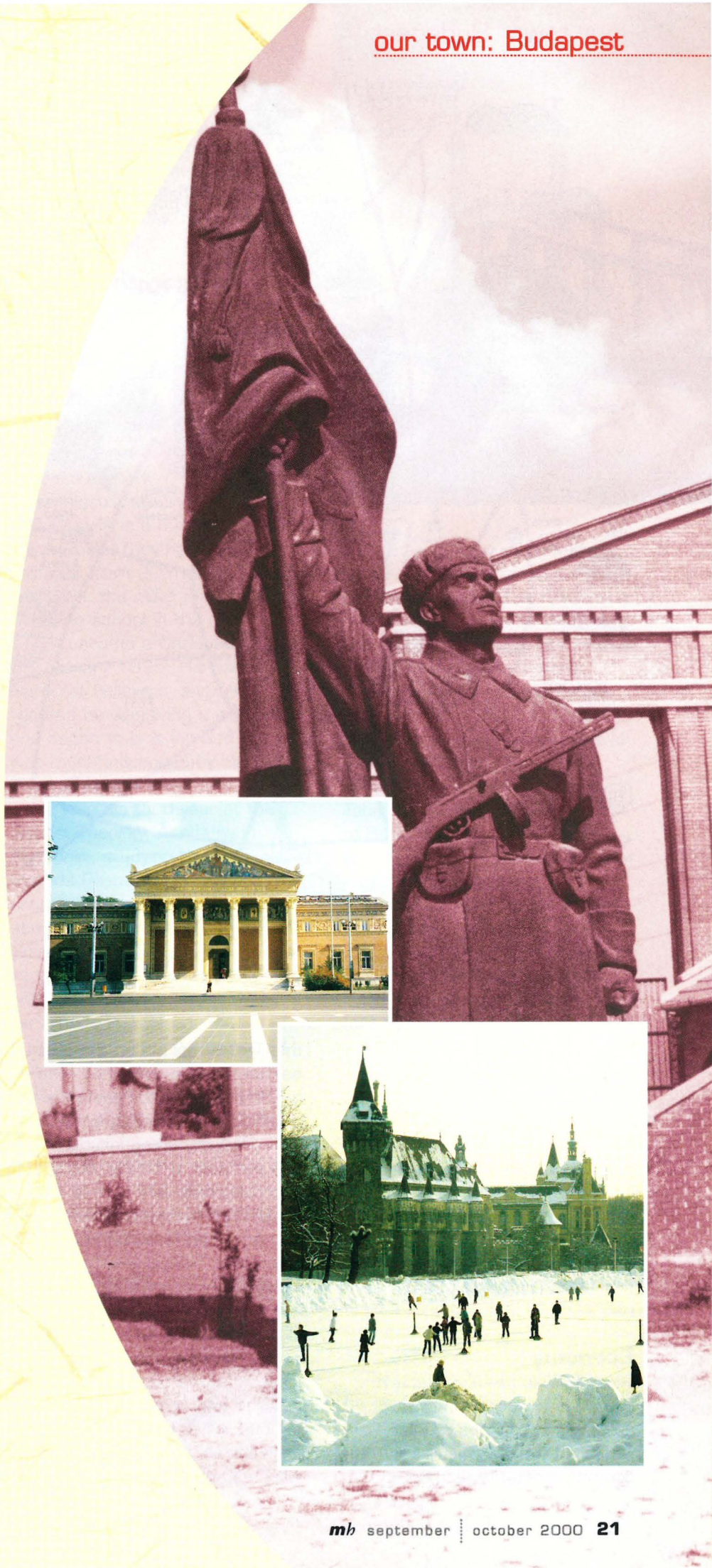
First Impressions

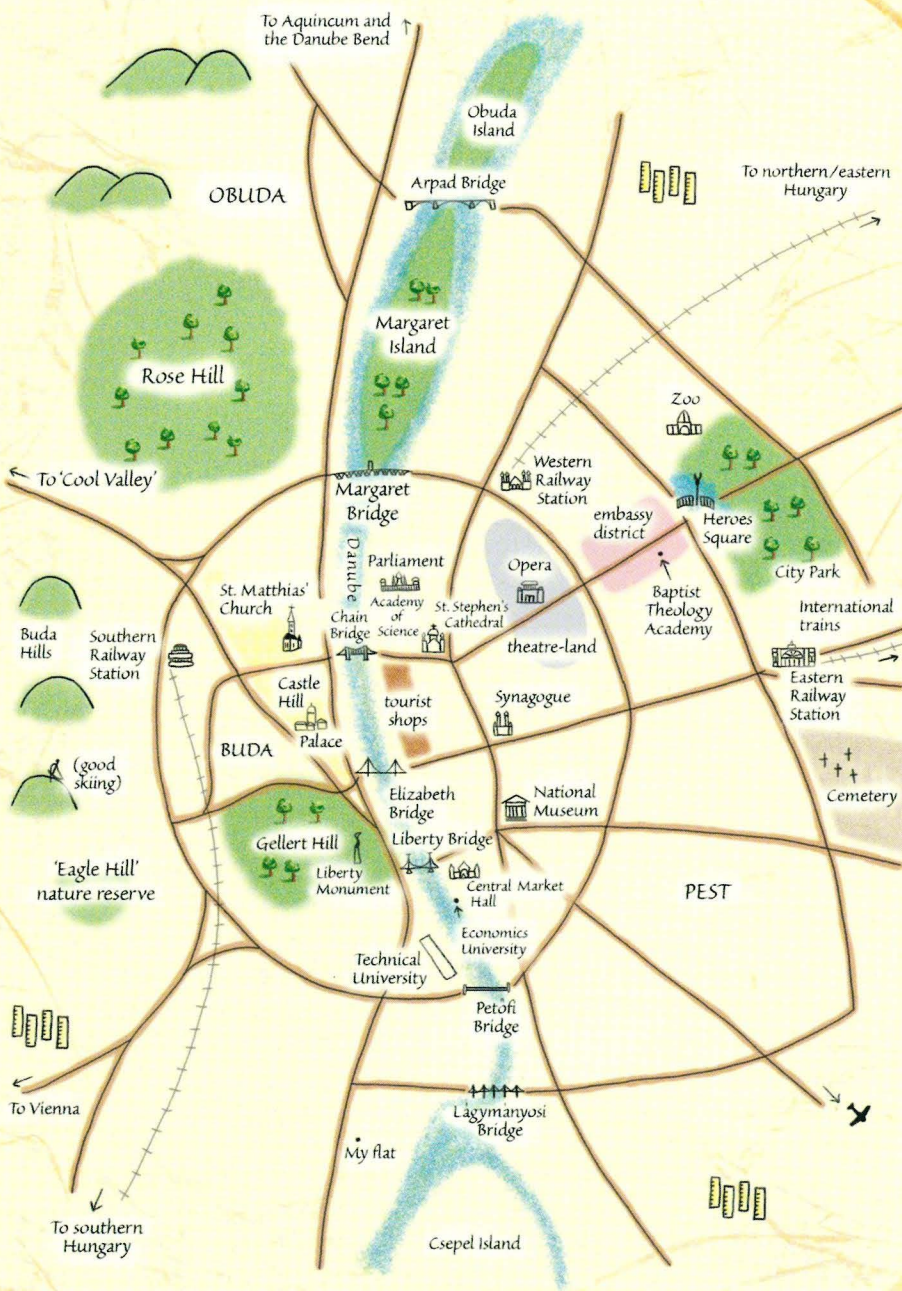
- stunning architecture
- pleasant place for a holiday
- people are very friendly in informal situations, and most unhelpful in official situations
- a frequent comment from many visitors, especially the children, is "Can I come and live here?"

People

Hungarians are neither a Slavic, nor a Germanic people. Minorities within the country include Germans, Slovaks, South Slavs and Romanians. There are difficulties between Hungarians and Romanians, including the ongoing dispute over the area of Transylvanian ownership. Many Romanians come to Budapest to sell their products and make some money, but are generally not too well received.

Altogether there are a quarter of a million Gypsies living in Hungary, and they have a hard





- It has the oldest underground railway on the continent, built in 1896, and one of the world's greatest public transport systems (metro, bus, tram, trolleybus).
- Budapest has the biggest synagogue in Europe, the second biggest in the world.

Leisure

In their spare time the people of Budapest like to:

- take trips to the countryside
- visit family members
- watch TV – and recent years have seen a multiplication in channels available
- do some gardening – many have an orchard or plot in the countryside that they visit regularly
- get involved in a sporting activity. The average Hungarian goes swimming once a week, especially in natural thermal baths which have Roman and Turkish origins. Budapest is a major spa centre with 123 springs producing 40 million litres of warm mineral water every day
- listen to music and play too. Famous Hungarian composers include Liszt, Kodaly, and Bartok
- Talk! There are very few conversational taboos; it is quite alright to ask what your salary is, how much rent you pay, or talk about your illnesses in great detail!

time. They are seen as not working for a living, and bringing down the tone of a neighbourhood. There aren't many black people in Budapest, although their numbers are now increasing, but they too experience difficulties. Anyone who is remotely different will find they are stared at, and will find it difficult to find a job or a flat to rent.

Economy

Hungary was the first eastern European country to move successfully towards market reform. It had received US\$7 billion in foreign investment by

mid-1994, more than the rest of eastern Europe combined. The country appears to have entered a period of sustainable growth, with gradually falling inflation (14 per cent in 1998), but the unemployment rate stands at 10.8%. Its main industries are tourism, food, entertainment, and chemicals. Hungary is the fifth most visited country in the world.

Budapest is famous for:

- The Pető Institute, offering treatment and education to children with brain damage. World famous, it has taken many children from the UK, until similar institutes were established there too.

Social Aspects

- Two million people live in Budapest – one-fifth of the country's population.
- Most families average two children. People live in a flat (in a block), or in a house with a



garden, but often more than one generation will live together. This is partly economic, as grandparents can look after children while both parents work, to earn enough money to keep them all. Two salaries are usually needed to cover even the most basic needs of a family. Traditionally there are much closer extended family bonds than in UK.

- Budapest has 15 to 20,000 homeless people, and a lot of beggars. If you leave school and have never had a job, you get no state benefit.
- A combination of traffic and factory output from manufacturing industries results in bad air and pollution. Road and rail networks are centred on Budapest – they are highly developed, but increasingly crowded. Budapest has nine road bridges; all were destroyed by bombs during World War Two. The 380m Chain Bridge is the best-known symbol of the city, and was built between 1839-49.
- Hungary has the world's highest rates of suicide and abortion – yet it also has more poets per head than any other country in Europe.

The Christian scene

Two thirds of the population is Roman Catholic; others include Calvinist, Lutheran, and Baptist. There are 20 Baptist congregations in Budapest, all with their own buildings, averaging between 100 to 200 members. Most have services once or twice on a Sunday, and

probably a youth meeting on a Friday evening. Sunday may include a prayer meeting before the service. Many churches are very full on Sunday, but a lot are merely nominal.

PEOPLE PROFILES

Zoltán Horváth

Age 32, from Pesterzsébet, a suburb of southern Pest. He used to work as an electrician.



Zoli's wife is a nursery school teacher, and they have four children, from 20 months to eight years old, the older ones go to a Christian school in the city.

Zoli became a Christian on 29 January 1995. His parents were not believers, and he realised he was living a sinful life, and began to look for God. He was much influenced by his wife's Baptist family.

He is in his third year at the Baptist Theology Academy in Budapest, studying theology. He attends Pesterzsébet Baptist church, which is quite big, with about 200 members, and is 100 years old. He describes it as a very loving and kind congregation, with lots of young people. It has a very modern, light and airy building, and often hosts special services for the Academy.

Zoli came to BTA because he felt God call him there, and he wants to be a pastor in a country church. Please pray with him that he will be a good pastor all his life, and that he will truly love his church, as Christ does.

Dávid Boros

Age 19, lives with his family in Budapest. Of his two elder brothers, one is a student at the Technical University in Budapest, now also working for Nokia, and



the other is a psychiatric prison nurse. His father has had many jobs over the years, and is now a bus driver, because he wanted work with less stress. His mother is a typist in the city centre.

Dávid is very grateful for his Christian upbringing, and made his major step of commitment at a worship meeting around the campfire on a children's camp in Tahi, the Baptist camp just north of Budapest. He says of that time, "It was just the first step. All steps are important."

He is just entering his second year of theology studies at BTA, with the aim of being a pastor. He is aware of how important it is to learn many things before he can fulfil that role sufficiently.

He is a member of Újpest Baptist church, but as part of his studies is on placement at a small congregation in the village of Súlýsáp, 40km from Budapest. It is a simple church with a total congregation of about 20, including children, and another part of the congregation in another village, sharing one pastor. Dávid attends every Sunday, preaching once a fortnight, and having lunch with different church members after the service.

Please pray that his studies will be useful, and that what he learns at the Academy and in his practical assignments will equip him for the job that lies ahead. ●

TEFL: opening many doors



Gillian Wotton



Margaret Pitt

The teaching of English is opening many doors for mission workers overseas. **Sam Gibson** reports.

I feel the call of God to serve him overseas but I'm not a doctor or a school teacher, a secretary or an engineer. I'm not sure what I can offer."

Does this ring a bell? There are many ways in which Christians can offer themselves in short-term service. One opportunity is to serve simply by using a knowledge of the English language. With a little retraining – sometimes just a one-term evening course at a local college – those with the aptitude can be equipped with a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualification, which can be used in an increasing number of situations. Often today mission personnel who go out to do an entirely different job can end up teaching English in some capacity as the need to have at least a basic understanding of the language is vital to many people across the world. Two women who have taken up the TEFL challenge with BMS are Gillian Wotton and Margaret Pitt.

Gillian served as a BMS missionary in Brazil from 1971 to 1984. As a retired Biology teacher, she already had the skills to teach but recognising the need for English teachers overseas, Gillian gained a TEFL qualification, and headed for Poland this month (September). Today she is teaching at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Radosc, Warsaw, helping students preparing for ministry in the Baptist churches of Poland. Most of her time is spent working with the theological students, improving their language skills to help them access texts written in English, and she is also involved in an outreach programme to the local community, offering English lessons to adults and children and bringing non-Christians into relationship with the seminary and the Baptist church which meets on site.

Margaret Pitt has been teaching English with BMS for over four years. Initially based in Novi Sad, Serbia, she moved to the International Baptist Lay Academy (IBLA) in Hungary in September 1998.

Margaret has been teaching lay leaders from a variety of countries across Eastern Europe, as well as members of the local community, as a form of outreach. To the church workers, English is a vital skill as it enables them to take a

full part in the activities of the European Baptist Federation (whose official language is English), as well as to study theological texts only available in English. Many of these students come from countries where there is great political tension – such as Kosovo, Serbia, Albania and the former Russian republics, and many are very poor. Margaret has often found herself inspired and challenged by the faith of her students; she says,

"[2Tim 2:2] is a wonderful reminder of the privilege we have here in being involved in God's work and Paul describes how the message of truth must be passed on. I am so grateful to God for allowing me to play a small part in the equipping of young men and women who will go back and teach their own people the great truths about Jesus."

TEFL opens many doors, from teaching street children in Brazil to theological students who will change the face of the churches across Eastern Europe, and anything in between. This is a changing world and mission opportunities change with it! ●

"I am so grateful to God for allowing me to play a small part in the equipping of young men and women who will go back and teach their own people the great truths about Jesus."

worlds apart

The Brazil Action Team have their thinking turned upside-down



When people imagine São Paulo they think of many different things – tropical climates, football, children, perhaps even favelas (shanty towns). Something we never imagined was huge skyscrapers and shiny Mercedes. Two worlds exist in São Paulo, one of the poor and one of the rich. What's really shocking is how close together they are.

We had always imagined that favelas were on the outskirts of the city and the centre was where everyone else lived. Coming to São Paulo showed us that the people who have nothing live next door to the people who have everything. The wooden

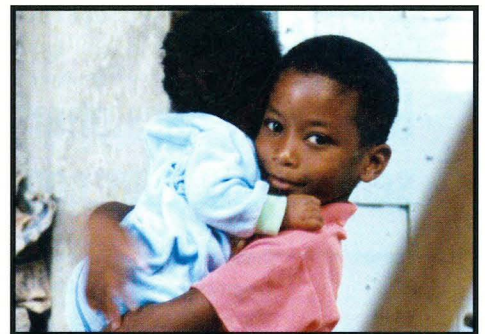
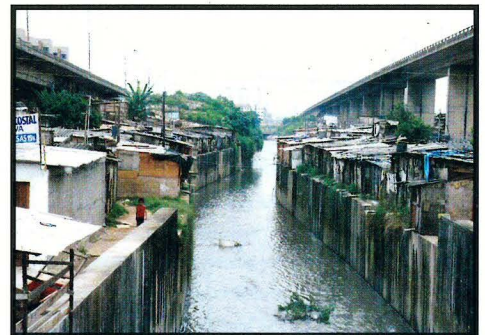
shacks of favela people are everywhere, even the most exclusive areas of the city are home to a favela.

But, although these two worlds exist together physically, socially there is a huge divide. The rich live in a different world to their poorer neighbours. We discovered a University Christian Union in São Paulo where, of the 20 members present, none had ever actually been in a favela. At this particular meeting the group were challenged to go into the favela next to their University and start helping their neighbours.

When Brazilians recognise a need, they respond in any way they can. Whilst we've been here in Brazil we've seen many examples of people meeting the needs of their neighbours. From the church in Itajai, Santa Catarina, who organised a Christmas party for 300 children who live in the favelas and have nothing, to the ladies in favelas who share kitchen utensils to cook their meals. The Christians here actively seek to help their neighbours and meet their needs.

What we've learned here is that being a 'Good Samaritan' isn't limited

to doing good things, we also have to look out and try to meet people's needs. The Brazilian Christians have shown us that there are always ways to help people, we just have to be looking to help. ●





Seven historical steps

Dr Richard Foster, author of the book "Celebration of Discipline," believes that the 21st Century could experience a historical missionary climax. He sees seven important steps which must be taken if this is to happen:

- 1 Christians must orient themselves towards God in all things, not themselves, success, church or seeking non-Christians.
- 2 Christians should not form church around marketing methods - don't "try to copy our culture's entertainment industry, and we should not win people for Christ through entertainment, but rather through the power of the Holy Spirit."
- 3 Christians should develop "habits of the heart" - daily spiritual discipline instead of sporadic outbreaks of inspiration and enthusiasm.
- 4 Christians should "say goodbye to the strutting peacock and self-satisfied director" as leadership examples.
- 5 The church exists to serve the world, not itself - put less value in our own institutions and more in serving the poor.
- 6 Get rid of the "building complex. Buildings can help to serve others, but they are not supposed to be monuments to our egos," he says.
- 7 "Christians should evangelize with power, but also with cultural sensitivity. All people must hear of Jesus and his love."

(Christian Daily News)

How many missionaries have been sent out by your congregation?

Country	Protestant Congregations	Protestant Missionaries	Missys per cong
Singapore	393	567	1.44
Norway	2,341	1,654	0.71
Finland	1,965	1,317	0.67
New Zealand	3,730	1,701	0.46
Sweden	8,332	1,749	0.21
USA	383,328	59,074	0.15
UK	46,262	7,012	0.15
Germany	23,487	3,510	0.15
India	97,796	11,284	0.12
Japan	6,581	407	0.06
Korea	37,985	2,237	0.06
Brazil	148,976	2,755	0.02
Total	761,176	93,267	0.12

* are newer sending countries

Of all the major missionary-sending nations, only in Singapore have Protestant churches sent out more missionaries than there are congregations. On average Protestant congregations are only sending out one missionary for every eight churches.

(Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is bigger than you think*)

More Bibles distributed

In 1999 the Bible Societies distributed 627 million copies of biblical literature worldwide — 7.2 per cent more than in 1998. The number of distributed complete Bibles (Old and New Testament) rose by 15.7 per cent to 24 million.

Figures dropped by 18.1 per cent for Asia because of the economic crisis.

But they rose for Africa by 11.9 per cent.

Bible distribution in Europe and the Middle East rose by 22.8 per cent. (UBS)

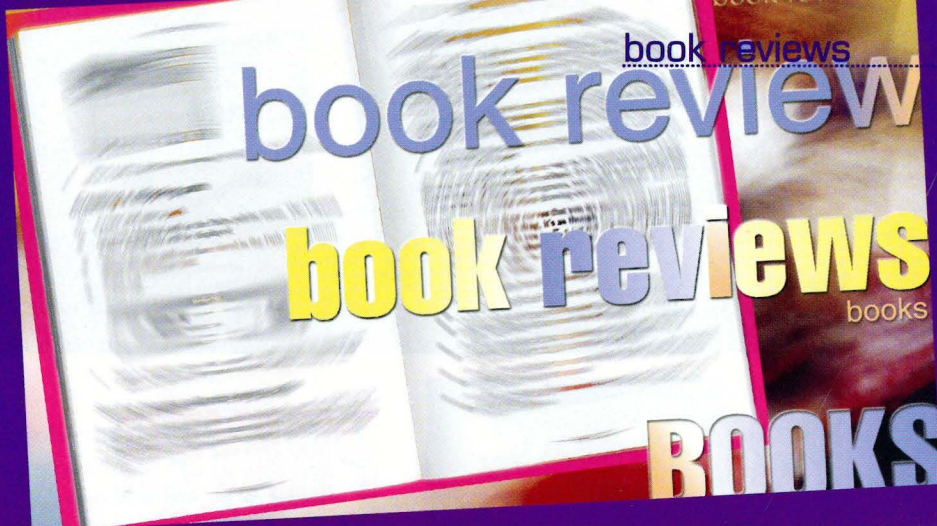
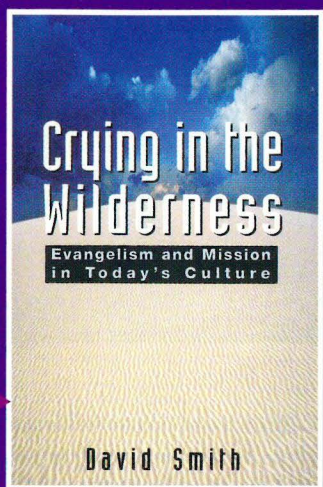
Church growth: dramatic figures

In Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East churches are multiplying rapidly, according to Stephen Steele of Discipling a Whole Nation (or DAWN).

"Churches are starting congregations at a pace never seen before," Steele said, "and in some nations are increasing by more than half every year. Church growth experts consider a ten per cent increase a good year."

He added, "churches are started in homes, on street corners and under trees. We look on church more as an event than a place. If people are gathering regularly to worship and hear Bible teaching, that is a church."

The DAWN report identified 33 countries where there is a great potential for dramatic church growth. They include: Argentina, Brazil, Botswana, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, England, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Norway, Philippines, Romania, Switzerland, Ukraine and many Middle East and North African countries as well. (Religion Today)



Book Title: **Crying in the Wilderness**
Author: **David Smith**
Publisher: **Paternoster Press, 2000**
(ISBN 0-85364-811-5)
Reviewer: **Simon Jones, BMS Co-ordinator for**
London and South East
No of pages: **89**
Price: **£7.99**

So just what's happening in the church in the UK? The Financial Times (no less) runs articles telling us that pin-striped young city types are coming through Alpha to faith in the ultimate boss – Jesus. Meanwhile statistical surveys of church attendance chart a miserable decline in numbers: just 7.5 per cent of the UK population now go to church regularly. The 1990s – the decade of evangelism, the decade of Alpha – saw church attendance plummet by a million.

What's going on? David Smith's slim volume does not have the answer. But it does help us to raise the right questions, starting with William Carey – something to thrill the heart of every *mh* reader!

Smith's succinct analysis of the birth of the modern missionary movement uncovers an important shift in Christian thinking. The BMS believed that the gospel of Christ could and would transform society.

But 50 years after Carey had set sail for India such a view of mission was giving way to one founded on a much more negative view of the world and individualistic understanding of the gospel. 'The social dimension for witness receded as emphasis was increasingly placed on rescuing individuals from a world for which no hope could be entertained,' says Smith. Exemplified by the ministry of DL Moody and the hymns of Philip Bliss, this view still holds sway over large sections of the church – especially among evangelicals.

Having sketched this historical shift, Smith turns his attention to the church's need for a missionary theology. Sadly too many people are trained in a theology where mission is an option – perhaps chosen over linguistics or church history. This means that as the church decays in the west, Christians – from pastors to youth leaders to home group leaders to regular Sunday attenders – do not have the tools to understand what is happening or engage with the post-Christian culture emerging all around us.

Having looked at the church in Scotland as a case study, Smith turns his attention to how Christians might engage in mission in the modern western context. His analysis does not make for comfortable reading. Indeed at one point he suggests that perhaps the church in the west is unsalvageable in its present form. He is not the only one saying this: New Zealander Mike Riddell announced a similar prognosis in his 1998 book *Threshold of the Future* (SPCK).

Smith's book is short on answers – for which I for one am very grateful. We are not ready for answers until we have begun to ask the right questions. This short, well-argued and nicely-written book helps us to do that. ●

Book Title: **Bricks without Straw**
Author: **Ryder and Heather Rodgers**
Publisher: **Life Changing Books**
(ISBN 0-9530487-1-3)
Reviewer: **John Smith, BMS Co-ordinator,**
Central & Eastern England
No of pages: **179**
Price: **£3.99**

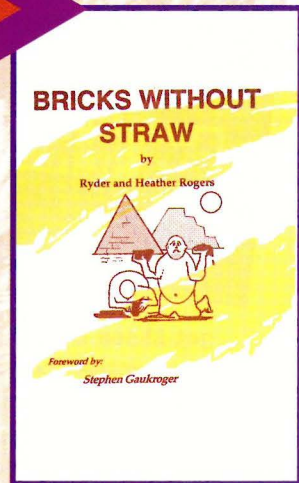
Mission is incarnational. You don't sit outside of a situation; you actually get in to it, live in it, and work it out with the people you are trying to touch. Ryder and Heather Rodgers know all about incarnational mission. Currently BMS missionaries at Bregu-i-Lumit, Albania, they write this potpourri of a book of the joys and challenges of planting a church in Luton.

Bricks without Straw tells the story of a new church, born from an Association vision to plant a church on a new housing scheme. It is an extraordinary story of how within just eight years the church was born, a building constructed, leadership established, and the first missionaries sent out. It is a no-holds barred insider account.

But this book also contains a wealth of helpful insights into the church's developing philosophy of mission and ministry; covenants, leadership structures and evangelistic materials are usefully included. This book has depth as well as breadth. It is a good book for those exploring effective church planting models.

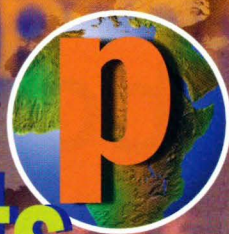
It is also a family story. Of one family who moved in, built a church, and then moved on to build again. For Ryder and Heather were those first missionaries. It is the story of a church family, which they saw come to life, one which should have been called "The Church of the Happy Family", because they laughed such a lot together.

I joined those two families in that building recently for the funeral of Rachel Ryder, their daughter, following her untimely and sudden death. Rachel was still a member of the Bramingham Park church. I recall then wondering how this new, vibrant, joyful church, meeting next door to the supermarket, might have come to be. *Bricks without Straw* answers that question. ●

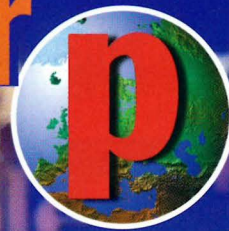




Projects

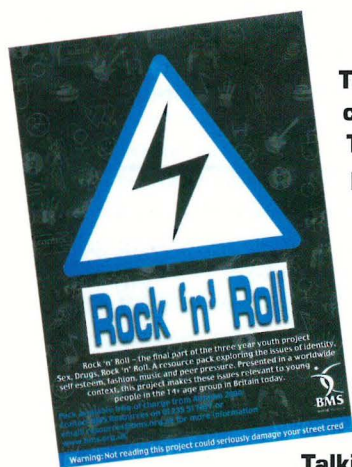


prayer



people

PROJECTS UPDATE



**Too many choices?
Too much pressure to succeed?
Out of step with fashion?
Sometimes it's tough being young.**

Talking helps to

get these issues into perspective, and here's a publication to help you.

Rock 'n' Roll is a resource pack for youth group leaders, with chapters on identity, peer pressure, self esteem, fashion and music, which will strike a chord with teenagers. Presented in a lively way, each chapter has leader's notes, suggestions for ice breakers and activities, pages that can be copied onto OHP acetates, statistics and world wide case studies, showing that issues of youth culture are not confined to this country. The discussion questions in each chapter will get your group thinking in depth about what influences their decisions and actions, and there are also biblical quotes from a Christian perspective.

Rock 'n' Roll is the final part of the three year youth project Sex, Drugs, Rock 'n' Roll, and will be available from BMS in October. Single copies of Rock 'n' Roll are free of charge, but a donation of £2 per copy is requested if you need two or more copies. Copies of Sex and Drugs are also available.

Not reading this project could seriously damage your street cred!

PRAAYER FOCUS

**Reuben and Katie Martin:
Dubrovnik, Croatia**







After six months training at Spurgeon's College in London, followed by several months of Croatian language study based in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, Reuben and Katie move to Dubrovnik this month (September) to plant a new church.

During the 1991-2 war, Dubrovnik was heavily bombed by Serbian troops destroying 60 per cent of the buildings in the old town. The area is now peaceful and restoration work is taking place on the buildings, but the emotional scars take longer to heal. There are no evangelical churches in this town of 50,000 people – the nearest is three hours away. Reuben and Katie have therefore been asked by the Baptist Union of Croatia to live in Dubrovnik and start a work there with the help of Croatian couple, Daniel and Lidija MacKenzie.

Reuben and Katie say, "The prospect of planting a church in Dubrovnik is exciting but also scary. None of us feel like natural church planters but believe that the people in the town need to know Jesus and we believe that's what we've been called to do. We are not going to Dubrovnik with great plans concerning what we are going to do, but instead are planning

initially to make contact with people, listen to the needs in the town and then try and lead people to Jesus. We are aware of our limitations, we're foreign, we're Baptist in a Catholic society, we're missionaries and we're not yet fluent in the language – we have many weaknesses and we know that we have to simply rely on God and give him the glory for all that he will do in Dubrovnik."

Please pray:

-  **That Reuben and Katie will quickly settle into their new home and life in Dubrovnik.**
-  **That they, Daniel and Lidija, will work well as a team and make good contacts and friendships in the town. Pray that they will be inspired and encouraged.**
-  **For other believers to be quickly added to the church.**
-  **That many people in Dubrovnik will come to know Jesus through this work.**

Jenny Smith: Budapest, Hungary



Jenny has clocked up several years of voluntary service with BMS, teaching English as a foreign language in Hungary in 1993-95 and again from



August 1998. Now she has made the arrangement more permanent by joining BMS as a long-term missionary Since August 1998

Jenny has been teaching students at the Baptist Theological Academy in Budapest, enabling them to access the many texts that are only available in English. The Academy now has a vision to establish the first centre in Eastern Europe where Baptist students can study for a Master's degree and a PhD in Theology. If it is to be a centre

for surrounding countries, courses will have to be taught in a common language, which is most likely to be English. Jenny says, "If my contribution can assist in the training, not only of future church workers and leaders but also of future theology teachers for the whole region, what a privilege!"

Please pray

- P** That the Lord would provide a new prayer partner as Jenny's current partner is leaving the country.
- P** For the plans and visions being pursued at the Academy; that the Lord would bring the right ones to fruition.

Akha churches in Chiang Rai every other weekend. When she is there, Judy lives on the site of a children's hostel, teaching around 50 teenagers English, helping with homework, overseeing health needs and assisting the Akha churches that she visits.

Please pray:

- P** For Judy as she investigates possible areas of future work.
- P** For patience in forming new friendships and for protection from loneliness.
- P** For strength to deal with the emotional turmoil of building close friendships with people who are suffering and dying.

Judy Cook: Chiang Mai, Thailand



In March BMS nurse Judy completed her period of formal language training in Bangkok and headed up to the hill country in the



Clem and Elaine Mason: Pristina, Kosovo

Clem and Elaine were due to head for Nepal as

BMS volunteers but, responding at short notice to a greater need, they have instead been based in Kosovo since April. Their role is varied but includes administration, supporting the local church and its evangelism work, building relationships between the various evangelical and other groups working in Kosovo, providing hospitality to visiting Christian workers and the all-encompassing anything else that God wants them to do! During their first two months, they saw the average congregation size at the church in Pristina double to 25. They now run out of seats on some Sundays and are considering what to do for the future. A Bible study in Glogovc is strong and well attended and has seen two members make a commitment to Christ. The Masons are working on starting a Sunday evening service there too.

A Hungarian Baptist Aid team have made the aid warehouse in Pristina more efficient and have set up a programme to provide doors and



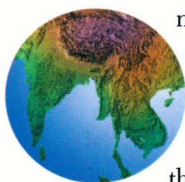
windows for the many homes that still

do not have them. Love in Action, the organisation through which the Masons are working, are negotiating with the authorities for some land on which to build a social centre with classrooms, bookshop, offices, a Christian library and a Baptist church.

Daily life in Pristina is gradually improving. Clem says, "In between the dirt and devastation you suddenly come upon a pretty house with a well kept garden, and people are making an effort in all sorts of small ways. The tree-lined streets are lovely and give us a taste of how the city used to be." There is much left to do to rebuild though. There are regular power cuts, the water is off every night with cuts increasing through the day too, and the roads are being patched up in many places. Social Services are fully stretched coping with 80 per cent unemployment and 2,500 refugees returning every week. This places enormous pressure on housing, hospitals, welfare programmes, etc. The UN are organising registration ready for municipal elections in October – this is likely to be a time of increased tension as the various parties struggle for power. Security is improving as far as serious crime is concerned, but there are still the occasional major security alerts and petty crime is high.

Please pray:

- P** For continued health and strength for the Masons.
- P** That the Glogovc church will attract many local people who are open to God's word.
- P** For continued growth of the church in Pristina.
- P** For God's peace on the people as they look ahead to October's elections and opportunities for a brighter future.

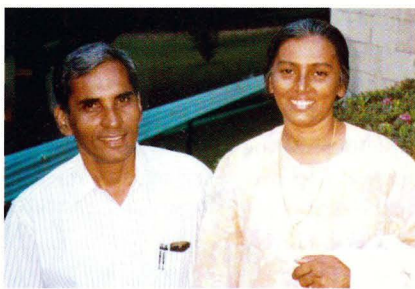


north of Thailand to begin health work and continue part-time language study. Judy is now based in Chiang Mai working with the House of Love, a

hospice for women and children with HIV/Aids, and with the Health Project for Tribal People, visiting villages to observe the health teams as they teach and helping with surveys such as the use of herbal medicine and the ever increasing orphan problem due to deaths from Aids. She is also building relationships with the women and children at the House of Love. Judy works with several tribal groups who all speak their own language so as well as learning Thai, she will need to pick up the basics at least of several other languages. She is currently learning Akha whilst working with the

BMS personnel introduce some friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



Doctors Mathew and Anna

Mathew's life was changed while a medical student in Nagpur. An idealistic young man, he had been influenced by Communism and by Ghandi, but through reading John's Gospel, he came face to face with Jesus. Later he married Anna, who had been a medical student in Vellore and life seemed set for a career in paediatrics.

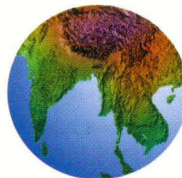
Anna and Mathew's second child, Anita, had severe difficulties soon after birth and died at the age of four months. Mathew had begun to think about the problems of children with special needs but this was a new area and almost no work or thought had been given to it in India. To travel along this road would mean giving up good prospects in mainstream medicine. But they were sure that God was speaking through that tragedy.

Mathew and Anna moved to Madras and took a room next to a hotel. It was here, without equipment or income that they set up the Child Development and Research Centre. At first no parents brought their children. To have what many termed a disabled child was a shame. Encouraged by

friends to follow their vision, they pressed on. Gradually parents began to bring their children. The centre moved to a rented house and the work slowly expanded.

There may be as many as five million children in India with various needs and there are few who care or understand. We laughed together as Mathew remembered the time he was referred to as the 'handicapped doctor'. Almost three years ago now the centre in Madras was invited to join CMCH in Vellore as a special unit within the Department of Paediatrics. Now the department can hardly cope with the numbers of children brought in from all over the country. It is through Mathew and Anna's faith and witness to a God who cares for every individual that has influenced and continues to influence all who visit the Department of Developmental Paediatrics.

From Ann Bothamley, BMS nurse and hostel parent in Vellore, India



MiiSaa

MiiSaa is an Akha lady in her mid-late 30s, who was 'sold' as a young child by her family, to be 'adopted' by a rich, childless family in a nearby Akha village in north Thailand. When she was 15, this family were able to have a child of their own, so MiiSaa was no longer wanted. Once more she was sold, into marriage – but her husband was a drug addict, and abused MiiSaa and her young child. MiiSaa was eventually forced to run away, leaving her child with a neighbour, and she ran to relatives in the city. These relatives also tried to sell her, to a rich man, but MiiSaa overheard their plans and ran away again.

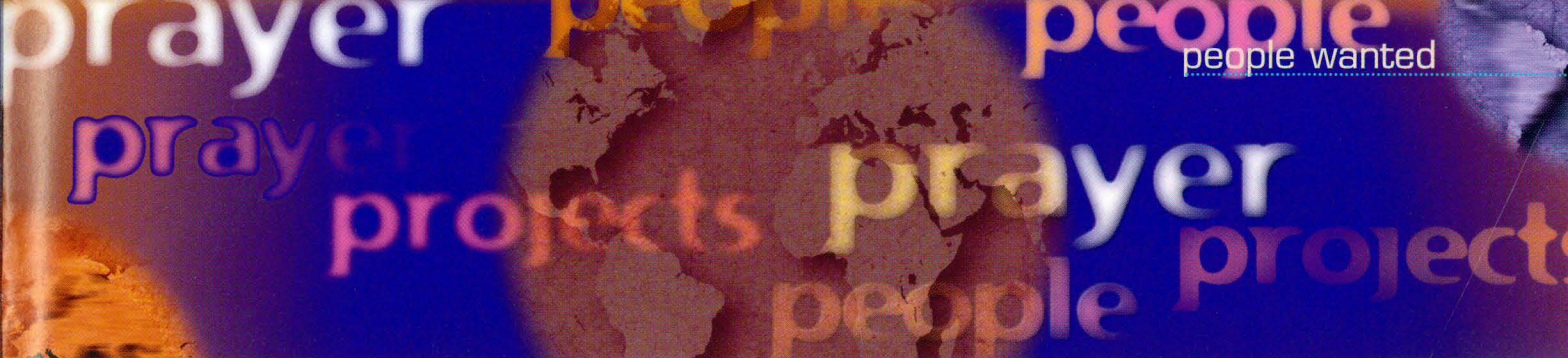
She had nowhere to go, but met a man selling fish, and he seemed to care for her. Soon she had a second



child with this man, and they were content for a while, but he became ill. He died of AIDS, and had passed on the virus to MiiSaa. After his death MiiSaa and her son sought help from the Health Project for Tribal People, and now they live in the House of Love. Here they receive loving care and security.

Over her time here MiiSaa has come to learn about a God who loves her, and cares for her, and she is learning to trust people once more. MiiSaa has a loving, outgoing nature which extends to all the children at the House, not just her own son. MiiSaa explains: "I love God, and now I know that God loves me, I want to say thank you for that." MiiSaa's story is the text of the Akha video used to teach other Akha villages about AIDS, as one of many home-made teaching materials prepared by the Akha Team at the Health Project for Tribal People.

From Judy Cook, BMS nurse working with the Health Project for Tribal People, Thailand



People Wanted

Could this be you?

Cyprus

Information Officer (SAT-7)

Urgently required to research, write and distribute information relating to SAT-7 activities, prayer letters, newsletters, press releases etc. This person also will prepare and distribute promotional view graphs, promotional videos, brochures, manage the SAT-7 web site, manage the calendar for critical events and funding applications, arrange conferences and hotel accommodation, escort visitors in Nicosia and the Middle East, facilitate Board meetings, distribute agendas and record minutes.

Bulgaria

Minister

Experienced Pastor for pastoring, evangelistic work and training of leaders is required by the Baptist Union of Bulgaria. Experience of church strategy and administration would be useful, to assist the Union in its development and growth. Learning the language would be essential and a minimum of five years commitment is asked for. At present there are about 40 congregations and 12 full-time pastors, most of whom have had little or no formal training.

Nepal (INF)

Pastoral Carer/Couple

To provide INF and its members with pastoral care and to assist the Director in duties relating to the spiritual support and encouragement of members.

Qualifications required: professional qualification plus three years relevant experience. Counselling skills, teaching, pastoral and personnel care experience and an understanding of mission and missionaries are also required.

Kosovo

Ministers/ Ministerial couples

Required for general church work and church planting. Many exciting new opportunities for discipling new Christians and identifying and working with future church leaders. Opportunities for both experienced and recently qualified ministers.

South Central Asia

Opticians, Optometrists, Technicians

Ophthalmic Specialists are needed to teach and demonstrate appropriate skills in basic eye-care, optics, or optometry and to work in co-operation with national staff in an eye hospital and/or community-based eye-care project. Opportunities for community/rural work are also available.

Nepal (UMN)

Primary/Elementary Teachers

Experienced professional teachers for small groups of five to eleven-year-old missionaries children of several nationalities are urgently required. Will need to teach all subjects at primary/elementary level in English.

This is only a very small selection of the kind of vacancies we have available at any one time. Our 'People Wanted' list is changing all the time. Please contact us, and ask if we have anything for you. See page 35.

New personnel

Danja Klaes

Danja is a Senior House Officer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at a hospital in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. She got to know BMS while at Hazel Grove Baptist Church in Stockport, and is currently a member of Fullarton Church in Irvine. Danja's service with BMS will begin after a period of training at IMC from September 2001. The likely location for service is South Central Asia.



Jenny Smith

Jenny has been a BMS volunteer in Hungary teaching English at the International Baptist Lay Academy, and more recently at the Baptist Theological Academy. She is a member of St Matthew's Anglican Church, Oxford and also the International Baptist Church in Budapest. It is anticipated that Jenny will start long-term service with BMS during the summer of 2000, and following a period of training at IMC, go back to Hungary. (See Jenny's feature Our Town: Budapest in this *mb*, page 20.)



Jane Waites

Jane has also been a volunteer with BMS, working in Albania for 18 months, teaching at the GDQ School in Tirana. She is a member of South Parade Baptist Church in Leeds. It is anticipated that Jane will start long-term service with BMS during the summer of 2000, and following a period of training it is likely she will return to Albania.



BMS
world mission

news

Baptist House News

Welcome to:

Malcolm Macdonald

who took up the new post of Volunteer Programme Organiser from 7 August. Malcolm, previously, was an evangelist and pastoral assistant at St Stephen's Church, Twickenham. He has been involved in short-term summer missions with Faith Mission Canada.



for another, and took over the editorship of the Missionary Herald magazine. In November 1996 he became Director of Communications, and in his time has overseen many changes in the department. He was also responsible for much of the behind the scenes work involved in putting on an annual Baptist Assembly.

Richard is leaving to join Scripture Union as Head of Promotion and Communication. We shall miss him, but know that God is leading him on to a new phase of service.

Farewell to:

Richard Wells

Richard joined BMS as Publicity Manager in March 1995, having come as Editor of the Bucks Herald. He swapped one Herald

BMS Relief Fund Grants

The following recent grants have been made:

Ethiopia £10,000

To provide food for those affected by the most recent outbreak of famine in Ethiopia. This money will be transferred through Baptist World Aid to the Mekane Yesus Ethiopian Evangelical Church.

South Central Asia £20,000

For relief work among the nomadic and settled communities affected by drought in this area. To be administered through IAM.

Sierra Leone £450

To provide 300 digging hoes for use by the Mohal Community Development Programme in Sierra Leone. These hoes will be used to rejuvenate projects devastated in recent unrest, replacing

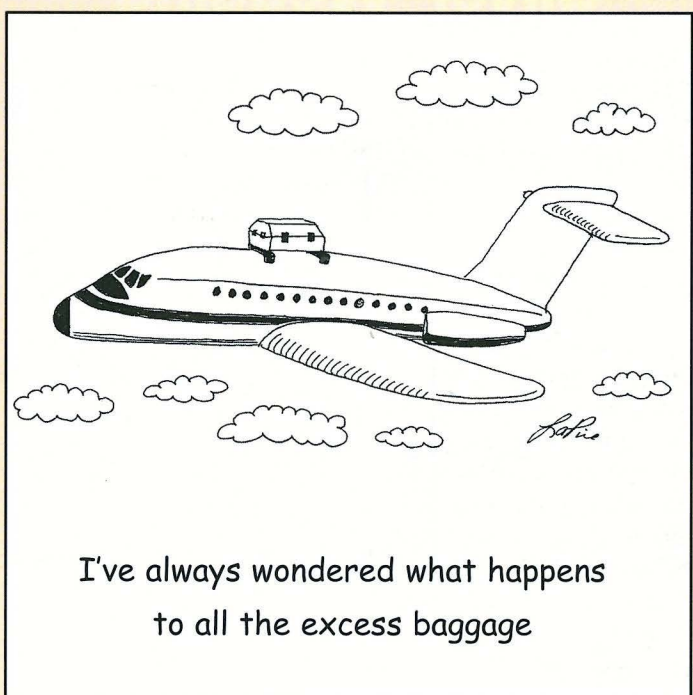
Signs and Blunders

Many of the men here travel around the streets on mopeds. They drive on the pavements, towards oncoming traffic, and round corners with little regard for safety. The idea that they might have an accident is far from their heads. Many years ago, someone recognised the danger of head injury when falling from a fast-moving bike, and they invented the crash helmet, a round object that fits neatly over the head, protecting all that is inside. The men here often have crash helmets, but the helmet's role of saving them from severe brain injury is not their primary one. For the most part they hang on the handle bars. The other day I discovered the crash helmet's primary role. When buying fresh milk from the shop, it is decanted into a plastic bag, and then carefully placed in the gently swinging crash helmet, where it is free from harm for the duration of the journey.

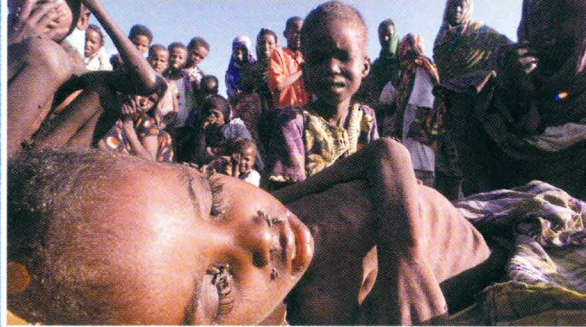
From North Africa

As part of my farewells in Bangladesh I was given some plaques and packed them in my boxes to be shipped home. All the contents had to be listed, but a typing error occurred when being copied onto the export permit, and so when they came to collect the boxes the man from the shipping company wanted to know where the three plaques were!

From Sue Headlam, BMS worker in Bangladesh



PA NEWS



tools that have been destroyed or stolen. This money will be channelled through TWAM.

Congo £26,000

This grant will help to provide medicine, food, clothes and bedding for around 500 families in Kisangani and Yakusu following a confrontation between Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers in and around Kisangani, in which many innocent Congolese people were trapped. The Red Cross has confirmed over 400 civilian deaths, and many hundreds of families are suffering from lack of basic provisions.

Above: Famine in Ethiopia.
Right: Nomads in Afghanistan.
Below: Planting crops in
Sierra Leone.



PA NEWS



Check Out September/October 2000

September 2000

Arrivals

Simon and Karen Collins from Luanda, Angola

David and Ann MacFarlane from Barletta, Italy

Departures

Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Pat Woolhouse to Kimpese, Democratic Republic of Congo

October 2000

Arrivals

Saverio and Betsy Guarna-Moore from Tirana, Albania

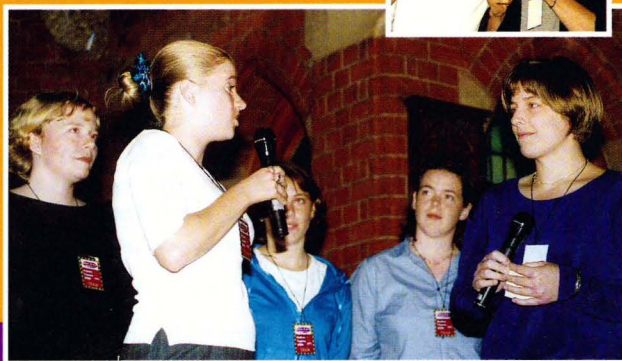
Departures

David and Ann MacFarlane to Barletta, Italy

world mission link

Access All Areas

The finale of the 1999/2000 BMS Action Teams, held at Shirley Baptist church, Birmingham, did not disappoint its audience of 150 or so people. "An amazing evening" people commented as the Teams challenged those present to give God access to all areas of their lives. They took part in a mixture of interviews, sketches and a talk was given by Isabel Gearty of the Nicaragua Team.



Silver Wedding gifts for BMS



When Dawn and Phil Trattles of South Bank Baptist church, Middlesbrough, celebrated their Silver Wedding anniversary recently, they asked that anyone wishing to give a gift, give to BMS instead. Doris Burdett, the

church Missionary Secretary, had recently received information about the BMS Project 'All Aboard!' – a project to raise money to help buy a new boat for Gerry Myhill's ministry among the people who live on the islands in the Bay of Paranguá, and other aspects of his work in southern Brazil – and decided this would be ideal to give to. Doris made a boat, and explained about 'All Aboard!' by writing on the sails. Altogether £300 was given to BMS for 'All Aboard!'



Chernobyl children get a holiday

Forty eight children from Belarus, accompanied by six leaders, enjoyed a summer holiday in East Anglia thanks to churches in the area. The children stayed in pairs with families based in Bar Hill, Dereham, Histon, Ipswich, Southend and Woodbridge.

By coming to the UK the children were given a break from their surroundings, affected by radiation 14 years ago. They enjoyed themselves by visiting theme parks and other places of interest, the seaside, playing sports and eating lots of ice cream.

Holiday 2000 was arranged, and mainly financed by the Baptist churches in the area, but Bar Hill LEP also took a leading part.

The changing face of mission

Now it's your opportunity to find out more, to give, to pray and to go...

INFORMATION AND PRAYER RESOURCES

☐ I would like to find out more about BMS work in:

☐ **Albania/Kosovo**

☐ **Brazil**

☐ **Hungary**

☐ **Indonesia**

☐ **Lebanon**

☐ I would like to start receiving news/prayer letters from:

☐ **Jenny Smith**

GOING

☐ I would like to find out more about:

☐ **the vacancies advertised on page 31**, especially
.....(please state)

☐ **other long-term vacancies**

☐ **being a BMS Volunteer**

☐ **overseas Action Teams** (Year Teams)

☐ **UK Action Teams**

☐ **Summer Teams**

GIVING TO BMS

☐ I would like to give financially to BMS. Please send me:

☐ **Ways of Giving** leaflet which tells me about all the different ways I can give

☐ **More information about the BMS Birthday Scheme**
(see back cover)

☐ **details of the BMS Relief Fund**

☐ **Gift Aid**

PROJECTS

☐ I would like to order:

☐ **Sex** qty..... ☐ **Drugs** qty.....

☐ **Rock 'n' Roll (available October)** qty.....

For these items only we request a donation of £2.00 per copy if two or more copies are ordered

☐ **Anything else, not mentioned above (please specify)**

mb magazine - maybe you've had this copy given to you, and you'd like to start receiving it regularly, or you'd like to give someone else a copy as a gift that will last all year round. At only £9.90 and with a free prayer guide three times a year it's excellent value!

If you want **mb for yourself** just fill in the details and your name and address in the coupon at the bottom of the page.

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help improve the **quality of life** by supporting

BMS World Mission and its medical workers around the world.

join the BMS Birthday Scheme in your church and help share a smile

tick the box on page 35 for more details

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mission
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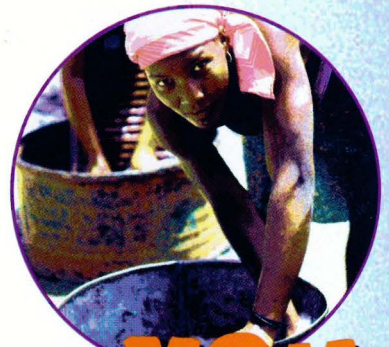
**"It was an
experience
of a lifetime.
It was a challenge.**



**It was a nightmare.
It was enjoyable.**



**It was frightening.
It was brilliant.**



**could you
survive?**

**It was all these things
and more really."**

Jon Trafton, India Team

BMS Action Teams
Making a world of difference

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mh



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COVER PHOTO: John Passmore, BMS

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A large crowd of people, many with their fists raised in a gesture of protest or solidarity, gathered outdoors. The image shows a dense group of men and women, mostly of South Asian descent, in a public square or street. Many are wearing white shirts, and several are raising their right fists high in the air. The background shows a large, ornate building with arches, possibly a government or institutional building. The overall atmosphere is one of intense public demonstration.



In Passo, a Christian town flooded with refugees, a missionary visitor received letters written by local school children to Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations. One letter read, “We children of Ambon are very frightened of the jihad soldiers and the army. They murder, loot, burn our homes and chase us away. They also rape the women they catch. The Lord

NEWS

has touched our hearts to beg the UN to come to Ambon. Help us, we are suffering terribly."

Church leaders of all denominations in Ambon have expressed concern to the European Union and the United States, saying they feel the world is ignoring the crisis. Human rights organisations are calling for military intervention to stop the violence, and open an emergency humanitarian aid corridor. They are also urging the Indonesian government to allow an impartial investigation of the crisis by UN human rights observers.

(Baptist Press)

Kazakhstan Koreans put on Christian festival

In an unprecedented move to allow a gathering of Christians in this Muslim and former Communist nation, the Kazakh government granted permission for a Christian festival just two days before it was due to take place. Silk

Road 2000 was held in Almaty, the capital, a city of 1.5 million people; it comprised of five days of educational seminars, medical clinics, meetings and cultural events, culminating with 18,000 Christians joining together in worship in Almaty's outdoor stadium. They sang "Shatahn! Shatahn! Shatahn, Kazakhstan!" which means "Shine, Kazakhstan".

Silk Road 2000 was the brainchild of nine Korean young people, who, in 1998, travelled on a pilgrimage along the old Silk Road – a trade route linking China with the Mediterranean – from Istanbul to Ulaan Baatar in Mongolia. They met many ethnic groups and experienced first-hand the reality of their divisions and conflicts. As they travelled they wanted to listen to God, and as a result, they decided to host a large-scale festival in Kazakhstan, the



COMPASSION RADIO

news in brief • news in brief • news in brief • news in brief

Yemen

A man sentenced to death for converting from Islam to Christianity has finally been released. George Haji, 27, a refugee from Somalia, was reunited with his family in August, and they subsequently left for New Zealand – who accepted the family as refugees. Yemeni authorities had been reluctant to allow Haji and his family to go to New Zealand, "because they were afraid this would lead other refugees (in Yemen) to claim to convert to Christianity in order to get resettled in a Western Country", a Middle East spokesman said. (Religion Today)

Kenya

A gang member who brutally attacked a pastor has become a Christian. Patrick Shikanda Lokhotio attacked Pastor Timothy Njoya with a wooden club outside the parliament building last year. Lokhotio asked forgiveness from Njoya and his congregation and Njoya publicly forgave him and asked the authorities to stop criminal proceedings against him. Lokhotio, who became a Christian at the beginning of the year, said he was ashamed of "beating up a man of God". He had been a member of a youth gang. During his talk he introduced six members of the gang, who also pledged to mend their ways. About 100 other gang members have said they will come to church. (ENI)

Egypt

Persecution of Christians has surfaced again in Egypt, where one Christian has been killed, apparently for building a church, and another imprisoned for inciting a Muslim mob into a murderous frenzy. Building or renovating a church in Egypt requires special permission, which can take years to obtain. Such projects have often sparked violence between the Muslim majority and Christians who make up about six per cent of the population. (CDN)

Turkmenistan

The Turkmen authorities are still actively persecuting Protestant Christians both as congregations and as individuals. Repeated accounts have been given of police raids on worship services, confiscation of Bibles, pastors being told to stop holding religious gatherings, and reprisals against believers at their places of work or study. The Turkmen authorities deny any such practices. (Keston)

World

A second annual report by the US State Department on religious freedom concluded: "Much of the world's population lives in countries in which the right to religious freedom is restricted or prohibited." They singled out China which has seen a rise in religious repression over the past year, and Myanmar where the government is attempting to coerce Christians to convert to Buddhism. (CDN)

centre of Central Asia, for ethnic reconciliation and peace.

Christians from many countries attended, coming from Chechnya, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, Uzbekistan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and the Ukraine. Others travelled from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Europe to take part. Two thousand Koreans flew in from Seoul. Many of them had leadership roles at the festival, and hundreds more took part in short-term mission projects throughout Central Asia after the festival.

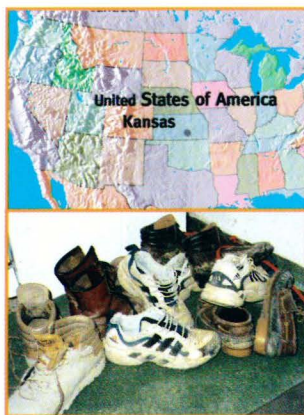
The only Western leader to address the gathering was Luis Bush, International Director of 'AD 2000 and Beyond'. He saw Silk Road 2000 as a "watershed event". He commented that it had "the potential to launch a powerful evangelistic movement all across Central Asia and into Turkey."

Norm Nelson, a Western media representative, commented that evangelism was not the immediate object of Silk Road 2000. He said, "The primary objective was to demonstrate God's love for the people of Kazakhstan, and to bring Kazakhstan Christians together for support and encouragement." (Assist)

United States Church buys children new school shoes

One congregation in Dodge City, Kansas, is working hard to ensure that needy children of primary school age have a proper pair of shoes to go to school in.

The shoe ministry began as the congregation searched for innovative ways to have a



positive effect on children. The church office manager, Dee McKnight, said, "For a lot of families, shoes are generally an expensive item, and for some families it comes down to making a choice between shoes and school supplies because money is not available for both. Shoes and how they look are important to children, and we felt this was a good morale builder for children to have new shoes to go to school."

The church determines who should qualify for new shoes, by offering a voucher, worth \$25 to any child who already receives help with school lunches. Around 60 per cent of primary school age children in Dodge City schools qualify on this basis.

The church sends letters about the shoe ministry, in English and Spanish, to parents of children in the local school district. The parents have to fill out an application form and provide proof of children's ages and eligibility for free or assisted school lunches.

Six local businesses have agreements with the church to provide the shoe ministry. Vouchers are sent to the applicants, and the applicant presents the voucher for the shoes to the shop, who then invoices the church for payment.

The church received 800 requests this year, and raises the money to pay for the shoes through contributions from

its 1,200 members, and other local individuals and businesses.

It is hoped that the ministry will expand in the future to include students of secondary school age. (UMNS)

Sudan Slave trade revival

In August United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan briefly suspended all UN relief flights into the south after bombs narrowly missed grounded aircraft belonging to relief agencies, thus increasing the risk of starvation for tens of thousands of innocent Sudanese people.

But the civil war in Sudan has revealed another ugly aspect: a revival in the slave trade. Arab militias, armed by the northern government, raid southern villages and abduct women and children to use as forced labour.

Former slaves gave harrowing accounts of rape, murder and brutality.

Kabissa Ayak, 28, told of how she was caught in a

surprise attack. Her husband and child were killed in front of her. "One of my sons, aged one and a half, was taken and pounded to death (in a cereal grinder) before my eyes. When I saw this, they wanted to kill me too. I took some clothing and bound it around my stomach to try to stop myself weeping." Kabissa said she was stabbed in the thigh and kept in constant hunger. She remained in slavery for four years. During that time she was raped and made to give birth among the cattle where she slept. She had to deliver the child on her own. "It was as if they were playing with an animal, not a human being," she said. "I called the baby 'Mam', which means 'Suffering'". Eventually she escaped.

Another former slave, Madelina Nyajur, said she was beaten for refusing to convert to Islam. She was captured at the age of 15 on her way to school. She and 28 other children were forced to cultivate crops. If they worked slowly they were beaten with camel whips. Madelina said she was raped by a relative of her master and became pregnant. "I was afraid they would kill me, so I escaped".

Estimates say that as many as 100,000 Sudanese have been enslaved. Organisations such as UNICEF work to trace and return abducted children. Somewhat controversially,



Christian Solidarity Worldwide buys back slaves, and so far has purchased the freedom of some 25,000 people. (Newsroom)

Greece Religious affiliation dropped from ID cards



A government agency in Greece has ordered that religious adherence be removed from state identity cards, a requirement that has been seen by minority religions as contributing to religious discrimination.

For years religious affiliation on the Greek ID cards has reportedly been one of the most sensitive issues between the socialist government and the Orthodox church.

Greek Orthodox leaders have expressed the fear that the removal of the religious label was the first step in a process of separation of church and state, and with it, the weakening of the church's long-held power in this country where 97 per cent of its citizens are listed as Orthodox.

Orthodox Church spokesman, Metropolitan Theoklitos, said: "Orthodoxy is an indivisible part of our identity and we want it written on the identity cards."

However Thomas Karbonis, director of the evangelical radio station,

Channel 2000, agreed with parliament's decision. "I personally don't mind writing my religion on my ID," he said, "but it is a matter of principle. I have known nurses who could not find a job because they were not Orthodox. People affiliated to a minority religion have also been put under police surveillance."

Greece was the only European nation that previously required its citizens to declare their religious beliefs, and one of the few with state identity cards.

The 1998 report of the Helsinki International Federation for Human Rights indicated Greece continues to discriminate against all non-Orthodox churches. Recent court cases before the European Court of Human Rights have called on the Greek government to grant greater freedoms to religious minorities. (EBPS)

Australia Students lead 500 to Christ

Students from a Brisbane Bible College have been making short excursions into Australia's outback, and as a result, around 500 people, most of them teenagers, have made professions of faith in Christ this year.

A spokesman for the college, Mark Badham, said the students were "on fire for God". Making one week, two-week, and month-long visits to rural areas the 140 students are reaching communities throughout Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. They preach at churches, hold evangelistic outreaches, and talk with students, he said.

On a visit to Yeppoon, a

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

It's a beautiful lake. Placid water surrounded by gorgeous hills, with the awesome daily miracle of a God-painted crimson sky mirrored on the surface as the sun sets.

But wonderful though it is, there's a sense in which this lake shouldn't be there. The tops of dead trees breaking the surface of the water is a sign that this Lake Khao Laem in western Thailand wasn't there as recently as 16 years ago. It's the product of a hydro-electric scheme, with a dam, about 75 km from Sangklaburi. Village, which had existed there for generations, had to be abandoned. Now there's a new lake and power for a large section of Thailand's population. This is progress.

But is 'progress' always worth it? This example probably isn't so bad. New homes were found for villagers. But round the world the insatiable appetites of modern technology and economics don't always treat people or the environment well. Villagers can be shifted to inhospitable, infertile regions. Land and rivers can be polluted. Animal and bird life can be poisoned. Where nuclear power goes wrong the damage can last almost for ever.

Condemning the developers is easy. But every house ever built, including mine, wiped out a piece of land once free to grow flowers and feed birds. And the energy that gives us light or heat, or the machinery that makes our furniture and computers, or the manufacture of even our processed food, all these use fossil fuels or destroy forests or generate effluent or pour out greenhouse gases to destroy the ozone layer.

God provided this world for our well-being. Using it isn't wrong but abusing it is. When we exploit, without thought, to present or future generations we diminish the gift of this world to all God's creation. And that's not progress.

Lake Khao Laem is beautiful and for that reason I'm glad it was built. But beauty alone doesn't justify its creation. Nor does the desire of my generation to have more and more of everything we want legitimise other less attractive developments. God's children need to be asking what's right for the whole of God's creation and if that means we have to get by with less, so be it. ●

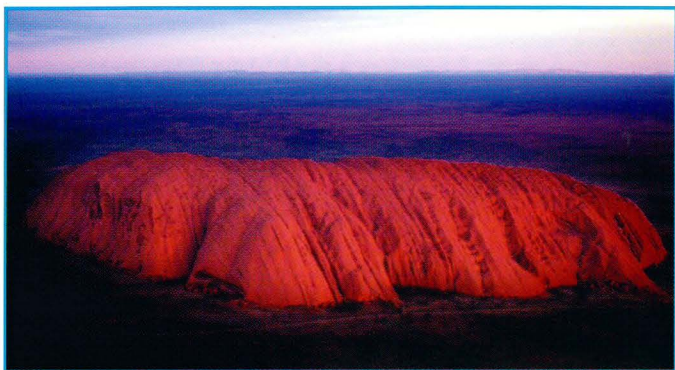


Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS

Queensland coastal town, the team spent two weeks at a secondary school, teaching Christian history and answering questions on spiritual matters, and as a result 250 people came to faith. Whole classes of students became Christians,

and Badham added, "young people were seen praying for each other in the school".

He told of one 15-year-old boy with a ponytail and pierced eyebrows. The boy gave up alcohol and drugs, and now reads the Bible daily. He asked his father, "Dad,



PA NEWS



you taught me how to pray when I was younger – how come you don't still pray?"

The school principal, Rob Stone, has said that the atmosphere at the school has changed for the better. Behaviour has improved, and the school chaplain,

Bernadette Muholland, who invited the Bible college students to come, is having a greater impact on students and teachers. Both the mayor of Yeppoon and police officers said the services had had a dramatic impact on the young people and expressed their support.

A core group of 40 to 45 young people now meet regularly at Muholland's home for Bible study, and several have asked her to baptise them at the beach.

(Religion Today)



For more details call the **BMS World Mission** donations hotline on **01235 517641**

Vinoth Ramachandra

Self-reliance or Inter-Dependency?

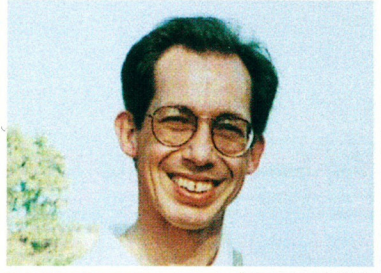
Is financial self-reliance on the part of churches really a Christian value? It seems hard to justify from the biblical writings, where the exchange of resources between individuals and local churches are often the visible expressions of true community. Paul's collection from the Gentile churches for the church in Jerusalem was not only intended to meet a real need, but also to demonstrate the reconciliation of Gentiles and Jews in the body of Christ.

Paul's concern was for a "fair balance" (2 Cor 8:13,14, NRSV), and the first-century Mediterranean churches that he moved among were far less unequal in income and resources than the global Church of today. As long as massive disparities in wealth exist, the insistence on self-support will be seen by the poor as a defence of the status quo. There are forms of dependency on the part of the rich that we rarely talk about in our churches. For instance, the net flow of capital in today's world is from the poor to the rich nations. Even within nations the lifestyles of the well-to-do are often subsidised by the less affluent.

Our concern in mission should not be self-support in itself, but rather the use of money to control, dominate or suppress local initiative. But there are ways of giving that are healthy, and ways of receiving that do not breed unhealthy forms of dependency. An example of the latter would be where a church makes no attempt to encourage its members to contribute to their work, because it is assumed that there will always be someone abroad to help. An example of responsible giving would be to give to projects that a church (not the giver) has identified as priority, and to check later whether the gift has indeed been used for the stated purpose. Money, whether its lack or its abuse, should not be an obstacle to mission. ●

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES





Lee Bray's diary

LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Continuing the extracts from his diary.

Tuesday 2

Today we fly on to Thailand. As we board the plane, everything is suddenly comfort and smart sophistication. We get a pre-booked taxi to take us to the Christian Guest House in the city. We check in, then stroll out to find somewhere to eat. After the repression of Muslim Bangladesh the anything-goes Buddhist culture of Thailand slaps us in the face. We find the nearest decent looking restaurant and dive in. The food is good.

Wednesday 3

The whole day is given to travel. Finally met by Angus and Carol MacNeill and driven to their home.

Thursday 4

Woken at 6am by dawn chorus. We set off early for the River Kwai Christian Hospital to take part in the morning service. We collect a few passengers en route, until the car is brimful. A small boy sits on my lap - still, silent and poorly. At Huey Malai the hospital has been relocated from its original site beneath the waters of a reservoir. We visit the under-5s clinic where babies are being weighed, measured, checked - organised pandemonium.



Friday 5

Today promises to be a real highlight of our trip - we are travelling to Pilokkhi village, only accessible by boat and/or on foot. We have little idea of what to expect, but Carol says it is one of her favourite places. After a couple of hours drive we arrive near the shores of a vast, man-made lake where we are met by four local pastors who will travel with us to join in the weekend of teaching and seminars. Together we make our way down to the water's edge and clamber into a long narrow boat. Before getting into the boat, according to Thai custom, we remove our shoes. At the other side, one-and-a-half hours later, there is a welcome party to meet us. They have a small two-wheeled tractor and cart to carry our bags. It is only two or three km to Pilokkhi, but in the heat it takes us another hour and a half to walk the distance. Our bags get there more quickly, accompanied by the tractor driver and a group of excited, laughing children. Pilokkhi rises up the hill from the waterside. Pastor David and his wife, Lady, have left their home in Sangklaburi to come and plant a church here. That church is now the centre of community life in the village. David and Lady's home is charming. We are served a fine meal - meat, pumpkin, noodles, rice - seated on the floor around a low circular table. In Thailand we are given cutlery but no chairs. In Bangladesh there were chairs but no cutlery! Above us there is a small fluorescent light connected to a small car battery!

That evening there is a service in the church building. It is positively western in design, almost Lutheran. It has a tower and inside are a raised platform with pulpit, rows of chairs and a gallery. (More surprising are the electric lights, ceiling fans, PA system, and overhead projector. Where does the electricity come from? There are no power lines to be seen.) First of all the children come to the front and sing. They are utterly charming, and I am completely won over by them. Then it is the turn of the choir, before Angus and Carol begin the weekend's teaching. After an hour or two we walk back to the house beneath a canopy of brilliant stars. No wonder this is one of Carol's favourite places.



To be continued next issue

"We felt that we didn't want to get to 50 and wish that we had taken more risks and trusted God more, rather than getting stuck in a suburban rut."



KM & RM are Katie & Reuben Martin. They have been working in Croatia since January 1999. They are from Leigh Road Baptist Church, Leigh on Sea.

five live

Five people talk to **Jan Kendall** about their priorities in life

JK: What were you doing five years ago?

K & SH: Leading very normal lives. We were busy with friends, setting up a home, church responsibilities and were both enjoying our teaching jobs.

JH: I was working at the Yorkshire Bank in Elland, near Halifax. I had been there five years, slowly progressing my way through the job scale.

RM: I was working as a policeman in the Essex coastal resort of Basildon!

KM: I was a Geography teacher in Leicestershire.

JK: What are you doing now?

JH: In January 2001 I will go to Kosova and work with a Christian organisation called Love in Action. They have been involved with

humanitarian aid but the Director is a Christian, who is also involved in establishing Baptist churches/groups, so I will help with the administration and be involved with the new Christian groups.

K & SH: We have just completed our first term with BMS in Nepal. We have been living in a remote Nepali village with no electricity, phone, plumbing or other foreigners nearby. We have been working in the local primary school's training teachers and trying to do anything we can to improve the quality of education, which is pretty dire at times.

KM & RM: We're church planting in Croatia.

JK: What brought the change about?

K & SH: The change came to us as a niggling doubt that turned into a more concrete feeling that we wanted

to 'do something' with our lives. God spoke to us through this feeling; he 'unsettled us' and gave us a push.

RM: Very simply God wanted me to do a different job. I believe that he called me to pastoral ministry, so I studied at Spurgeon's College in London whilst exploring pastoral opportunities outside of the UK with the BMS.

KM: I had always tried to be a witness to Jesus wherever I was living in the UK. However, I was also interested in the world outside the UK and thought that someday I would like the experience of working as a Christian in another country. I decided to complete my first two years of teaching and asked God to show me where he wanted me to be after that. Before the two years were over I had met and married Reuben and together we began to explore opportunities with the BMS. Our general call to work overseas



JH is Justine Horsfall. Justine is from Scapegoat Hill Baptist Church, Huddersfield. She was part of the Albania Action Team (1998-99), and also the Albania Response Team (1999).

became very specific when the possibilities of working in Croatia were discussed. We knew that this is where God wanted us to go.

JK: What was the single most important factor in this process of change?

KM: Getting my attitude to my possessions and my career sorted out. I had to trust God. I said, "If you ask me to be without my car, or my salary, I will because it's yours and I know you will enable me to cope. If you ask me to go to Mongolia tomorrow I will, because my life is yours and I trust you to care for me. If you want me to stay where I am, I will do that too, because that will be your loving plan for me too." Once I had arrived at the place of complete surrender, I could begin to listen to what God would really have me do in the next stage in life.

JH: Taking the initial step just to find out more about mission was not easy. It meant facing family, church and friends and leaving a SECURE job.

Many people asked me why I wanted to do that. It felt like opposition at the time and that was hard, but it was THAT step which enabled God to show the way and me to continue.

K & SH: We felt that we didn't want to get to 50 and wish that we had taken more risks and trusted God more, rather than getting stuck in a suburban rut.

JK: What do you think God is saying to the people in the area where you are now working?

K & SH: There are no Christians or churches in the valley where we have been living. It is a very traditional Hindu area steeped in customs and the caste system. We believe he is saying that Christians are OK and that our God is a God of love. He is also saying to women, children and low caste people that they are just as valued by him as the Brahmin men.

K & RM: Croatia is a Catholic



K & SH are Kate & Simon Harry. Both teachers, and members of Redhill Baptist Church, Worcester. They went with BMS to Nepal in 1999.

country. 90 per cent of the population is Catholic yet only 15 per cent actually go anywhere near church. As with many other European countries, most people hold only a nominal faith in God. Yet God wants people in Croatia to know him and to have a personal living relationship with him.

JK: How would you say God is working through what you're doing?

JH: God is using both the Albanian and Kosovan Christians to speak to their own people and I think that is the key. I see my role only to help them and support them in any way I can, through God's strength.

K & SH: People are open to talk about different beliefs and we've had some promising conversations. The people are also aware that we treat each other differently, that men and women are equal and that marriage is a partnership. We also hope that Christian values such as truth and honesty, equality and love have been shown through the work there. There are glimmers of hope in the classrooms too, and children are getting a much better deal at school. To see children having fun in classes rather than being afraid is worth everything and is definite evidence God is at work! ●

To boldly go

Why the continent of **Europe** is one of **BMS's** priorities

for nearly 1,000 years since the death and resurrection of Jesus the countries of Europe were the last and only refuge for Christianity. Muslim invasions largely eradicated Christianity in the Middle East, where it had first been born, and outreach to Africa and Asia was prevented by an encircling Muslim presence.

It was not until the Reformation in Europe in the 16th century that the Church was revitalised and eventually had a vision to take the gospel to the whole world.

But the statistics on this continent for today make sobering reading. Whilst Europe is still a major missionary 'sending' force, the people left behind are increasingly in dire need of knowing the power of the gospel in

their lives. A recent report indicated the declining influence of European Christianity from 42 per cent of the World Church in 1970, to a projected 21 per cent by 2025. In contrast, Africa will move from ten per cent in 1970 to 24 per cent, and Asia from nine per cent to 20 per cent in those same years.

"Why does BMS bother to work in Europe?" is a question that is frequently asked. This has been partly answered already. For those living in a country with a Christian heritage, fewer and fewer are regular worshippers in a church and most 'Christians' don't have a meaningful link with the Church. And there are others, especially from eastern Europe, who have lived in countries with a background of another religion or no religion at all.

BMS works in partnership in Europe, as elsewhere, with other Christian (and mainly Baptist) organisations, and works in a country or area only because of a specific invitation to do so. As Andrew North, BMS Regional Secretary for Europe says, "We're going where the opportunities are!"

The newest region in Europe that BMS works in is Kosova. Ethnic cleansing in 1999 opened doors for work here, and soon Baptists had established a church in an old driving school in Pristina, the capital. Mere months later BMS has played a strategic part in the opening of two more churches in Gjakova and Gllogovc in the Drenica region, the former stronghold of the KLA. This hasn't happened without a struggle,

Below left: Italy
Below right: Italy



and there has been what Andrew North describes as “significant opposition”. Muslim agencies from Turkey and the Arab Emirate states are eager to move into the area themselves, to remind people of their Muslim roots.

Croatia is also a new country of operation for BMS. After a year or so of language study, BMS workers Reuben and Katie Martin have moved to the historic, medieval city of Dubrovnik – a place of 50,000 people and little evangelical witness at all. Recently at a youth camp, 23 people made commitments to Christ. The Croatian Baptist Union welcomed a BMS Action Team for the first time this autumn.

Albania, once declared the world’s only officially atheist country by

dictator Enver Hoxha, now has 14 BMS personnel working there, and three more about to join them. BMS Action Teams have gone to Albania most years since the scheme started, and BMS is working on developing its volunteer programme in that country.

BMS also works in Italy, France, Belgium, Portugal and Hungary, all of them countries with a low number of evangelical Christians. Two BMS couples work in different parts of Italy, along with a Nigerian evangelist, T T Martins, employed by the Italian Baptist Union (IBU). This year nine new churches have applied to join the IBU, all of them from non-Italian backgrounds.

In France BMS personnel work in church situations. John and Sue Wilson have returned to France after a year’s break. They are church planting in Lyon, the second largest city in France, but with only one Baptist church.

In Belgium BMS will be supporting four more pastoral couples as well as Samuel Verhaeghe, the General Secretary of the Belgian Baptist Union. These couples will be located in strategic towns.

It’s not an easy option, working in Europe. It’s a continent still

dominated by secularism and humanism. In a world where nothing is certain any more it is offensive to many to present them with the unchanging claims of Christ. But Europeans need to meet the risen Christ just as much as anyone else in the world. And to introduce the real Jesus to those they meet is exactly what the 41 full-time BMS personnel working in Europe are seeking to do. ●



Top right: Church in Croatia

Far right: Pristina Church – Kosova

Below: Eiffel Tower

Bottom right: Portugal – City Square



where does prayer fit in?

Alan Pain talks about shifting principalities and powers



What did Jesus achieve by dying on a cross, and what are we to make of his final words, “It is finished”? Are they a dying acceptance of ultimate failure or, paradoxically, a dramatic cry of victory?

Paul seems to be in little doubt. Using some of the most exciting descriptive language of the New Testament, he paints a graphic picture: “Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” One conclusion waiting to be drawn from this daring reflection is that our task is not to shift the principalities and powers. It is so to live and so to pray that they know they are already shifted – decisively and inescapably. The death of Jesus completed the work of his ministry.

“So many of us pray because we are driven by need rather than kindled by grace. Our prayer is a cry rather than a hymn. It asks for strength rather than exerts it. How different was the prayer of Christ. It was less his duty than his joy. It was by his prayer that he countered and foiled the godless power in the world.” P T Forsyth, 1916

I’m tempted to continue at length but my assigned title requires me to relate this central feature of the gospel to mission in general and to prayer in particular.

Aylward Shorter, a Roman Catholic writer with

considerable experience of mission in Africa, argues that three things are essential to evangelisation: proclamation, praxis (reflection combined with action) and prayer. I welcome Shorter’s persuasive insistence on prayer as vital to mission. “Just as prayer is the heart of worship, it is also the starting point for all evangelization... The process of evangelization is not owned or directed by Christians, but by God... Evangelization is unthinkable without prayer, and inseparable from prayer.”

“Our pressing need is of more missionaries... Will each of you at once raise your heart to God and spend one minute in earnest prayer that God will raise up, this year, 18 who are suitable to devote themselves to this work.” “And the 18 who were asked of God began to come.”

Hudson Taylor, appealing for China, 1875

I need to say more about praying with an understanding of our struggle against the powers and with the confidence that they have been disarmed, but I want first to challenge the separation which has arisen between our private and our public life. We find it much easier to sing “Jesus is Lord” than to tackle a comprehensive application of this bold assertion of his authority. Lesslie Newbigin wrote: “Christianity in its Protestant form has largely accepted relegation to the private sector... By doing so, it has secured



for itself a continuing place, at the cost of surrendering the crucial field.” In other words, we may win some local skirmishes with the powers but that should not blind us to our disappearance from major battlefields. My point is that the emphases of our BMS mission statement are ideal for the launch of a counter-offensive accompanied throughout by appropriate prayer.

“I want to get to needy people and train disciples, and see Indians come into the kingdom.”

Pete Fleming, one of five American missionaries killed by Auca Indians (Ecuador), 1956.

Two questions spring to mind: Where do the principalities and powers operate? How do we pray against them?

In response to the first question, I believe the principalities and powers (of darkness) are at work:

- In oppressive structures which inflict immense pain and suffering on those who are powerless to assert themselves.
- In social evils that can prove costly to confront.
- In a human bias to sin which makes people selfish, aggressive and manipulative.
- In our failure to live so much in the grace of God that we achieve our full potential for Christ.

In response to the second question:

- Pray with the defiance of your baptismal assurance - Jesus is Lord.
- Pray consistently for those in missionary service who wrestle in unfamiliar cultures with the activity of the powers.
- Pray actively for the freedom of those who face poverty, squalor, disease, abuse and prejudice. Light candles instead of cursing the darkness.
- Pray for the safety of our children.

- Pray that you will make your unique contribution to the mission of Jesus Christ, without reference to your ambition or your location.

“Pete had prayed that God would turn the Ecuadorian jungle into a ‘proving ground’ in which the world could watch God act in response to our faith. He never saw the answer to his prayer. But I did, along with hundreds of thousands of people around the world.”

Olive Fleming-Liefeld, Pete's widow, 1990.

In conclusion, “Thy kingdom come” belongs to a glorious missionary prayer. Its scope runs from Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth. That is to say, it may start on your doorstep but it will move you and your church to pursue the demanding mission priority of prayer. You will be burdened for communities and for people who are special to you, and your praying will reflect both the heart and the achievement of God. ●

Four times a year, there is a major BMS prayer day, imaginatively planned and presented. It uses central venues, and people come to pray who are eager to play their part in strategic mission. They tackle big issues: advance into new areas; encounter with other faiths; situations of special need; the plight and the potential of suffering people, and all sorts of emergency requests.

Alan Pain, 2000. Or am I dreaming?

Alan Pain is Director of BMS International Mission Centre

Setting the local church **on fire**



Shaun Lambert speaks out from a Baptist minister's perspective

the church exists for mission as a fire exists for burning, wrote Emil Brunner, the noted Swiss theologian. I want to set the church on fire! Not literally (although it's an old building), but so that it exists for mission.

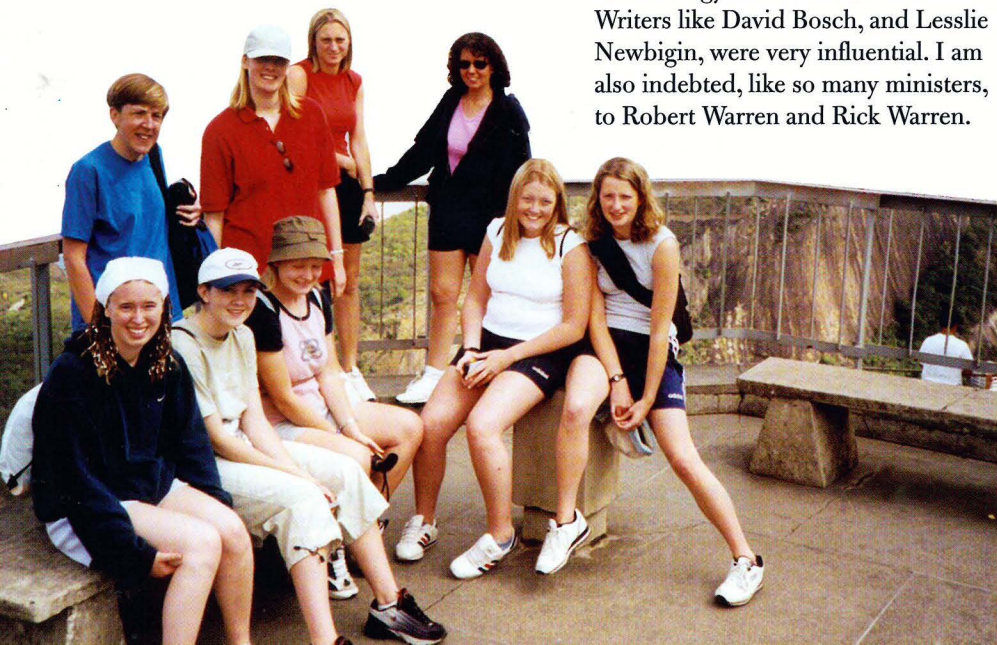
It's interesting, ask individual Christians, 'do you possess the mind of Christ?', they will say, 'no', or 'not yet'. Ask a local church if they are missionary-minded, and they will often say, 'yes!' And yet to be missionary-minded is to possess the mind of Christ, and no church can claim that, let alone an individual. That means the local church, as well

as individuals, are on a journey of transformation and renewal of mind. To be Christ-minded is to be missionary-minded. There is a tendency for all churches to become little Christian islands, just looking to maintain their own existence. A lot of energy is required for a spaceship to break out of the gravitational pull of the earth, and a local church needs a lot of energy to break out of the gravitational pull of being maintenance-minded. Part of the expression of being a missionary-minded church is to be a sending church, whether home or overseas. The strategy I believe in, to become a sending church, is one of building a strong local church. So I believe in getting the 'home fires' burning, not for maintenance purposes, but to enable the church to reach out, but also because 'home' is a missionary field.

Whilst at Spurgeon's Bible College I did a Master's degree in Christian Doctrine which included a module on the theology of mission since 1945. Writers like David Bosch, and Lesslie Newbigin, were very influential. I am also indebted, like so many ministers, to Robert Warren and Rick Warren.

The mission of the church I want Stanmore to focus on has five missionary dimensions: worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism and ministry (coming out of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission). Within the dimension of ministry outreach, there would be an emphasis on missions, defined as fulfilling the five purposes of the church in a different culture to our own. With the church leadership I am working on setting up action groups for each of the five missionary dimensions. We already have a missionary council who act as an action group for missions.

A congregational survey under the auspices of Christian Schwarz's *Natural Church Development* project, revealed worship as a key area of development. Theologically I also believe that worship (including prayer), and discipleship (through teaching), provide the energy required to break out of maintenance-thinking, releasing the church into evangelism, ministry, fellowship and missions. The way I am trying to develop that force and foundation for the church's life, includes investing in both the building and in people. In architecture, form should follow function, and the form of our building (a multi-purpose hall), does not assist the function of worship. I would like to see us with a building in which we can pray and worship seven days a week, not just one. Martin Heijne of bch architects has recently presented a feasibility study which majors on the building of a separate worship area. We are also looking to appoint a Music and



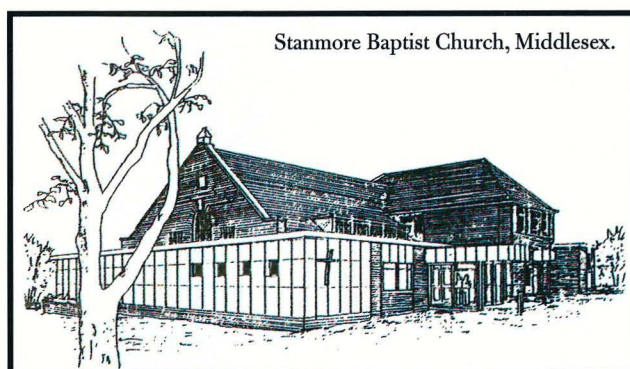
Left: Short term mission from Stanmore Baptist Church.

Worship Director. That's part of the strategy for building a strong local church, but we are also building a discipleship programme around Alpha. This year, using material put together by Rick Warren, we are running three discipleship courses, of four weeks duration each, with a meal. These focus on spiritual maturity, discovering gifts, and individual's life mission at home, at work and in the church.

The goals we are looking at include targets to double the size of the church over the next ten years (currently 120 members), and to send five career missionaries whether home or overseas, in the next ten years, in partnership with mission agencies. We are also looking to run three to five short-term missions to other countries in the next ten years. This year we are sending a team of 12 to Brazil, to work with an orphanage in Recife. As a church we currently give away about 20 per cent of our income to missionary work, and I would like to see that increase to 30 per cent over the next ten years.

So I don't see the church's missionary activity as calling individuals into the church as a waiting room for the hereafter. But I do want it to be a place where people are called in to belong, to become, and to be sent out in partnership with others. ●

Shaun Lambert is Senior Minister of Stanmore Baptist Church, Middlesex.

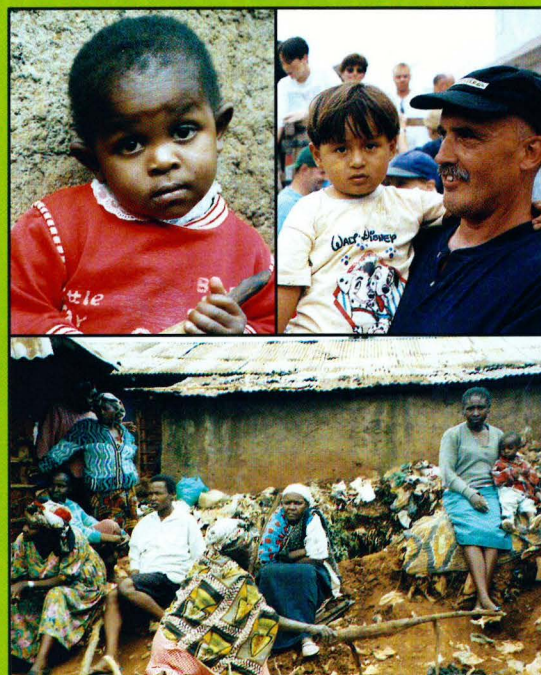


Stanmore Baptist Church, Middlesex.



"There is a tendency for all churches to become little Christian islands, just looking to maintain their own existence."

Owning half the World



I was struck sometime ago by the startling newspaper headline "358 Billionaires Own half the World". These people would include the Sultan of Brunei and Bill Gates who have made their fortunes from various business interests. The power brokers of the world focus on money and fame as the two main ingredients that bring popularity, prestige and influence.

The rapid growth of lotteries worldwide and the genesis of 'reality TV' programmes like 'Big Brother' are ample illustrations of the importance given to these ingredients. Without the money and the fame, your life is meaningless. The 'Big Brother' format placed ten people, for nine weeks, in one house with 26 cameras following their every move, 24 hours a day. It was possible to see what any individual was doing via a live webcam link over the Internet! Fame and money was at stake because each week the general public voted on who should leave the house and the one who was left won £70,000.

In terms of responsible Christian giving, the prime focus of our stewardship is in honouring God through the things he has entrusted to us. Living in the context of a 'money and fame' culture can easily corrupt our approach to giving, which is why Jesus speaks about the most effective way to give being generously and in private, the opposite to our contemporary culture extremes!

Perhaps it is time for us to rediscover God's economic principles of Jubilee which are recorded for us in Isaiah 61 and reinforced by Jesus in his manifesto speech Luke 4:18-19.

It can't be right that in an age where mission work often struggles financially, we live in comparative luxury. Owning half the resources of the world may make a great headline, but the real owner will hold us all to account one day! ●

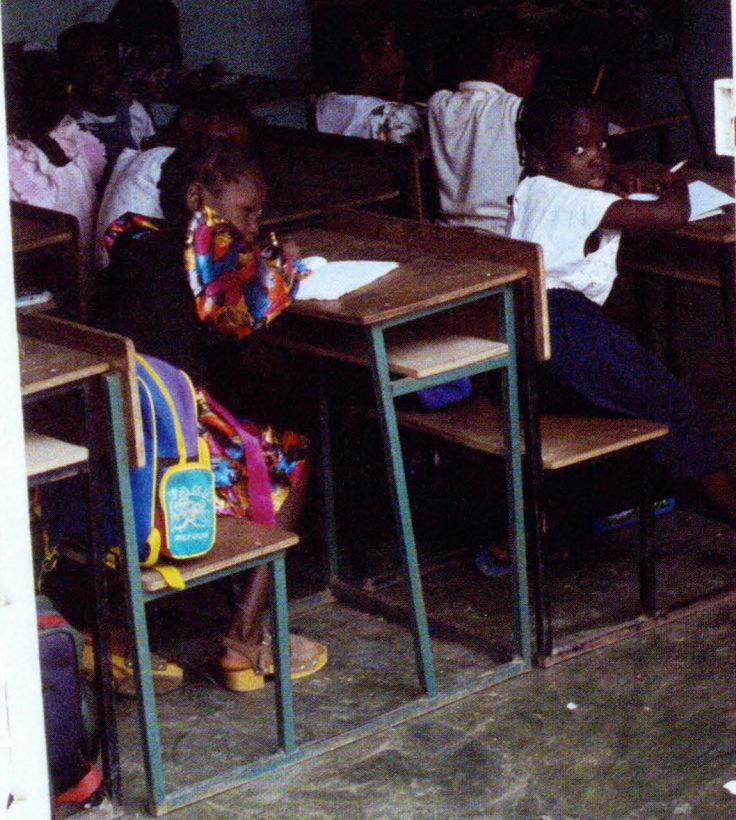
Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions



steve



When is a door not a door... ?



How does BMS decide when to say “yes”, and when to say “no”?

the door opens and a man rushes through. It shuts behind him. He can't turn back – he has to go on. He rushes across the stage, tries another door. That, too, is now locked. Then he jumps out the window. Minutes later a woman walks through the previously locked door, with great ease. It wasn't a problem. One minute it was locked; the next it wasn't.

A theatrical farce? Well, it could be. But equally representative of the world as a stage, and BMS as one of the players. Sometimes the doors are open. Sometimes they're shut. How does BMS decide which doors to go through? And when to go? Do we jump, or are we pushed?

What happens when we have to make choices and decisions about where to work? After all, BMS's resources are not a bottomless pit; they do have limits!

On average BMS receives one request a week for help with an individual project somewhere in the world. Less frequently we receive an invitation to explore working in another country. How does BMS decide when to say “yes”, and when to say “no”?

Sometimes doors just seem to open at opportune moments. It was in this way that it was possible for David Quinney Mee to go to El Salvador in 1988. Sometimes doors open after major political changes, the most obvious example being when Albania opened up after the fall of

communism. BMS sent its first workers, Chris and Mairi Burnett to Albania in 1992, and today there are 15 personnel there, plus two in training, as well as a constant stream of Action Teams and BMS volunteers.

The door of Kosova opened as a spin-off from working in Albania. We could not do anything other than minister to the deep needs of the Kosovan refugees in the light of their huge suffering. We demonstrated we weren't "hit and run" merchants, but were "in for the long haul", and as a direct result of this care and concern, we are now sending Justine Horsfall, our first long-term worker to Kosova in the new year.

But there are times when we make deliberate decisions to open new doors. Our work in South Central Asia and North Africa was the result of a deliberate decision to refocus our resources on unreached parts of the world. Our recent decision to partner the work in Lebanon was because we saw the strategic importance of a country within the Arab world where there was liberty to train Christian leaders from other countries in the region.

Of course, there are times when we want to go through a door, but it shuts on us, and we could be either side of it. It could be the door of war, as in Congo in 1991, when we had to evacuate 32 personnel swiftly, or Sierra Leone when we had to take Helen Johnston out in 1994. Sometimes the closing door is simply that governments are less amenable to having missionaries working there and that means a decrease in the number of available visas, which is the case in Bangladesh and India. Sometimes the door shuts because the work has been done, and there is no further need for missionaries from abroad, except, perhaps, very specialised ones, to work there. Up to the 1960s a lot of missionaries went to South Korea; now it is one of the most evangelised countries on earth. Similarly, in 1998, BMS made the decision to begin to close the work in Brazil; others are better able to continue the work.

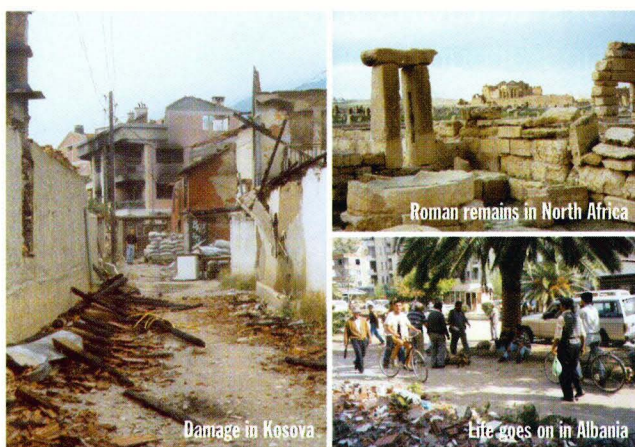
Of course it may not fully shut; it may only be partially closed. It is true that in most South American countries they don't need any help with evangelism, but they might welcome expertise in ministerial training or social care – things they've not got to grips with before.

There are also 'virtual' shut doors; that is to say the door is open, but no one is willing to go through it. It's actually very hard to recruit willing workers for certain parts of the

world like impoverished Bangladesh or war-torn Angola. In the first 40 years that BMS was in central Africa, 61 people died. Would today's generation enter missionary service with the same sacrificial spirit?

Shut doors can in themselves become opportunities for work elsewhere. The work in China was cut short in 1951, and as a direct result the work in Brazil began. Now that 'season' is coming to a close too. Where it's not been right to send personnel from the UK, we've regrouped and begun to use national Christians, who come with greater impact, prepared for the culture they're working in.

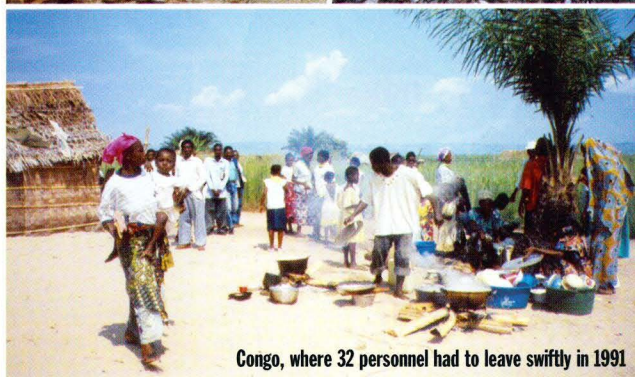
So the drama unfolds, as the speed of change increases and the doors open and shut at a whim. Prayerfully we seek guidance from God as to where we should be, and what we should be doing. But we rejoice that God is in control of his world; that he is never wasteful, and his economy of timing and his use of people's skills, abilities and availability is second to none. ●



Damage in Kosova

Roman remains in North Africa

Life goes on in Albania



Congo, where 32 personnel had to leave swiftly in 1991



North Africa

Calcutta

A series edited by **Jan Kendall** that looks at towns and cities around the world where BMS personnel are working by **Sarah Wood** and **David Foster**



Introduction

Calcutta is the capital of West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh. It is located on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River, an arm of the Ganges, about 96 miles upstream from its mouth at the head of the Bay of Bengal. This river port is the most important urban centre of eastern India.

The river bank is low, swampy, and humid, and therefore not ideal for human habitation. The land slopes away to marshes both to the east and the west, so most usable land is a strip three to five miles wide on either bank, though



reclamation projects have expanded the limits of usable land.

History

In 1690, Job Charnock, an agent for the British East India Company, leased the villages of Sutanati, Gobindpore and Kalikata (Calcutta) and formed a trading post to supply his company. It was here that British entrepreneurs began what would amount to the conquest of India; it was the capital of British India from 1772 to 1912.

After partition in 1947 four million refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) flocked to

Calcutta, and added to what were already huge social and overcrowding problems. By the 1980s centralised planning and public works programmes had helped improve social and economic conditions in the city.

First Impressions

Calcutta is a vibrant city with so much going on. Everything about it seems manic, but so natural to the locals. Having arrived at Dum Dum airport, we were whisked off on a 15km drive into the heart of the city. Straight away the pollution hit us: an inviting smog-cloud hovers at head-level. It makes London in the summer seem clean! We also got our first taste of Indian driving – there's certainly no Green Cross Code here! Budding Michael Schumachers zoom around with their hand constantly on the horn – apparently attached. Then there's avoiding the three pick-pockets on the bus who tried hard but failed; arguing with many a taxi driver, and fitting nine

people in an auto-rickshaw, which comfortably seats three.

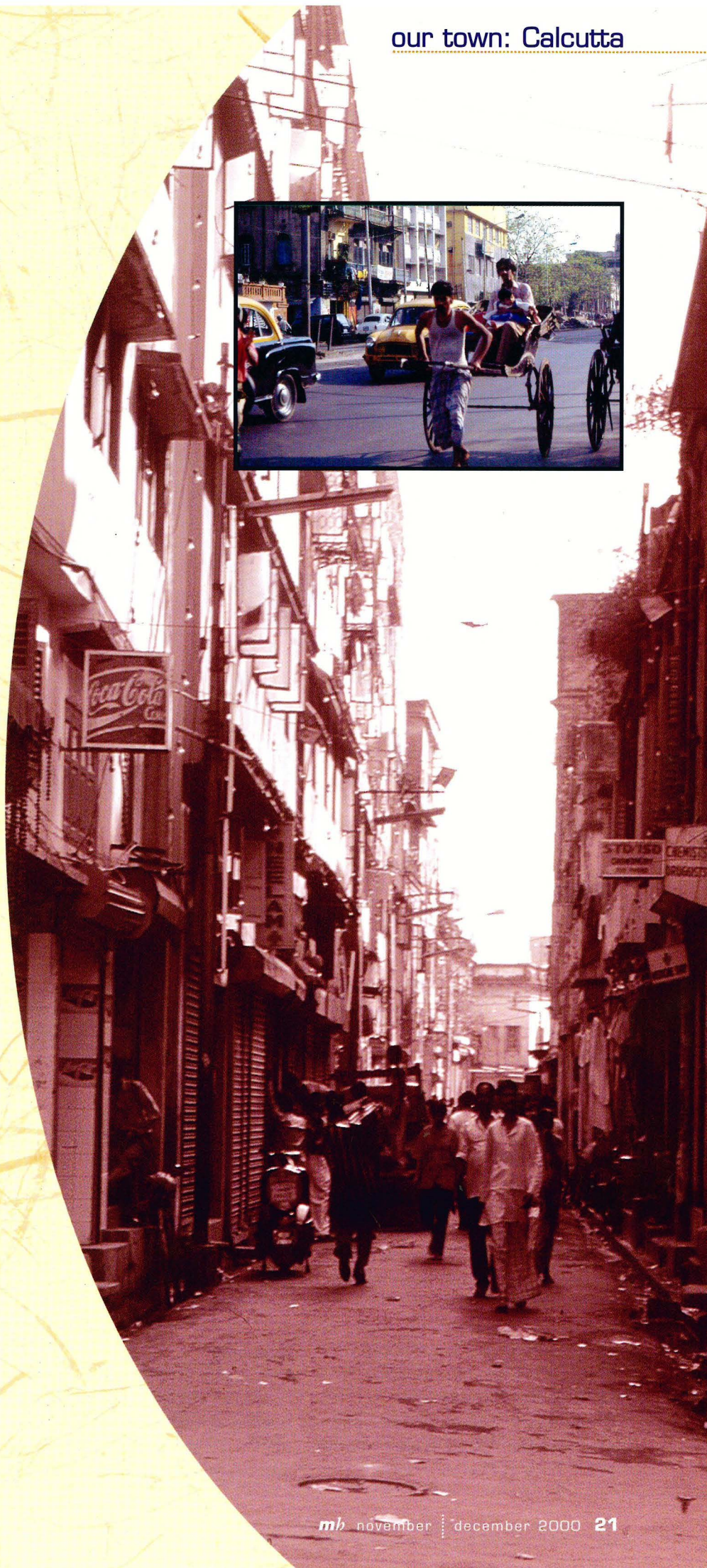
Overcrowding is a problem here and every street is bustling with activity. People getting on with everyday lives. The smells of street food intermingled with rather more unpleasant aromas from drains and piles of rubbish. Rickshaw pullers trying to offer you a ride. Dogs – not in the best state – doze and walk around aimlessly. Cows nibble on the mountainous refuse piles. And the best part; people coming up to you to shake your hand, say hello and practise their English.

The poverty is quite striking here; for example, you constantly see people just lying on the pavements with young children huddled up close.

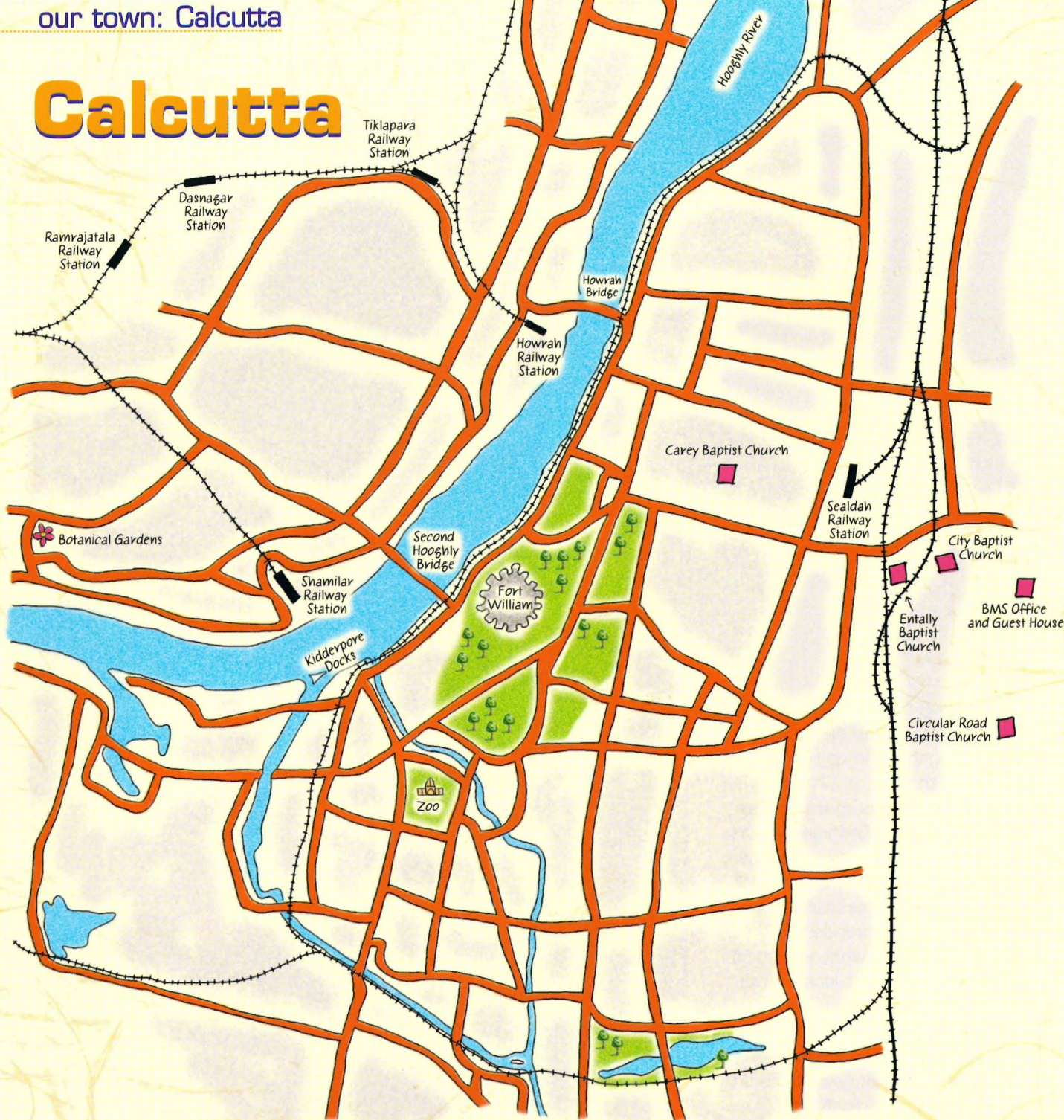
Day to day life

People are out and about in the city throughout the day. In the centre of the city, in Chowringhee and the enormous maze of New Market, you can find just about anything you can imagine on sale, including to our joy... a toilet roll! Coolies and traders follow you attempting to persuade you that they have exactly what you need! Del Boys try to part locals from their hard-earned cash and try even harder to con Westerners.

This is the area where cinemas show the latest Bollywood films to full houses every night. The singing, laughing, cheering and booing, all part of seeing an Indian film, make the experience like no cinema in the UK! On the corners of each street a makeshift kitchen is set up selling a plate of curry and a cup of chi (Indian tea) for a couple of pence. Men and women also play the game of Carom on boards set up in the streets. A game where the aim is to get the draughts-like pieces into the four pockets by flicking them across the board. Generally, life in a city like Calcutta takes place on the streets, where people work, eat, play, and sleep.



Calcutta



People

The population density is extremely high – about 85,500 people per square mile. Calcutta has experienced a high rate of population growth for more than a century but events such as the partitioning of Bengal in 1947 and war in Bangladesh in the early 1970s have contributed to massive influxes of population. Calcutta has large refugee colonies, and a large number of migrants from other states who've come here in search of work.

Calcutta is a cosmopolitan city, and apart from Bengalis, there are people from Asia, Europe, North America and Australia.

Over 80 per cent of the population are Hindus, along with Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists.

Economy

Calcutta is an economic centre rooted in industry, financial and trading activities. It is also a centre for printing, publishing and newspaper circulation.

Calcutta is the world's largest processor of jute.

The people are very enterprising and will try and sell tourists anything for a living. People own market stalls selling everything conceivable.

Some people will work in the leather factory just outside the city, which can be smelt!

Some of the poorest people work as human rickshaw pullers and children as rag pickers on rubbish heaps. Some of the children we worked with carried



water and made paper packets to earn a little money to survive.

Social aspects

Population: Core City 9,925,891
Urban Agglomeration 11,021,915

- Calcutta has big social problems of drugs and homelessness. Drugs derived from plants are very easily available and cheap. Heroin, also known as 'Brown Sugar', is cheaper than a bar of chocolate on the streets. The Calcutta Samaritans run a day centre for drug addicts giving them a place to go, counselling and the chance to go on a detoxification programme. They also go into the community, exchanging dirty needles for clean ones.

- There probably is a lack of doctors in the city or people just can't afford to go to one.
- People begging are found in the street, young children, women with babies, lame men; some of these cases will be genuine, others are organised begging rackets and will focus on tourists, following them up the streets.
- A third of the city's population live in slums called 'buskees'. These are defined as a collection of mud huts standing on a plot of land of at least one sixth of an acre.

Transport

On arrival in the city of Calcutta, you can't but help notice the traffic! The density and variety is incredible: Taxis, buses, lorries, underground, tram, auto rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, mopeds, and then there's people spilling out off the pavements!

The most infamous form of transport for which Calcutta is known so well is the human drawn rickshaw. These are pulled by some of the poorest men in the



city, often rural immigrants from the state of Bihar. Most earn the equivalent of one or two pounds a day. Their health is generally poor, often working barefooted, and their life expectancy low. If the city council were to take these vehicles off the road there would be an employment crisis for the 20,000 who make a living in this way.

The Christian scene

Right in the centre of Calcutta is St Paul's Cathedral. A reminder, with the enormous Victoria Memorial, of Calcutta's colonial roots. Throughout the city many Indian Christians meet in churches which are built in the distinctive colonial style. For many years these had been overseen by missionaries. However, most of these churches now have their second or third Indian minister.

The church we attended while in Calcutta was run with the organisation we were working

with, Emmanuel Ministries (EM).

We met in a large room in the house where EM worked from. Chairs were laid out for the service. The service was conducted in English with English and Bengali worship songs.

The room was full on Sunday mornings. The people attending worked for EM or were residents at the rehabilitation home for drug and alcohol addicts. Sometimes some of the street children came.

The most exciting Christian fellowship which we were able to join with was the Jeevan Jyoti fellowship, at the heart of the EM organisation. Overseen by Vijayan Pavamani, the fellowship is committed to reaching out to the many in need in the city. The pioneering social action which EM carries out witnesses to the power of Christianity to make a difference to so many in the city. The fellowship contains many who in recovering from problem or addictions and, having been given a future, have come to know the difference God has made in their lives. EM embodies Jesus' teaching that "it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick" in its commitment to reach out to those in greatest need.

Mother Teresa and her work in Calcutta:

Mother Teresa's work in the city of Calcutta is known throughout the world. Her work originated from a small house next to the Kali temple, in which the Hindus worship the goddess of death, Kali, from which the name of the city is derived. From these small beginnings Mother Teresa was able to give support to some of the most destitute and ill in the city; giving many a place to die in peace. Today her organisation has spread far wider, schooling children and running orphanages being some examples. Volunteers from around the world assist the Sisters in their work, which although difficult is very worthwhile and desperately needed. ●

Doing God's work... by mending leaky roofs

This year's Prague Summer Team explain

Volunteer work overseas doesn't have to be for years of our lives. One of the schemes run by BMS World Mission is Summer Teams, in which people over 17 can go out to do God's work for a much shorter period. And as the members of this year's Prague team found out, the work they do is also not always along the lines they expected!

The International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) is based right in the middle of Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. IBTS was founded in 1949, but only recently moved to its current location. It is a base for theological education for students from all over the world and from over 60 different nationalities.

It was here that a team of four (Alison, Jackie, Jessica, and Jonathan) went for three weeks in July. One of the team members, Jackie, said, "I knew I didn't want to go on holiday with my friends as usual and have always had an interest in doing volunteer work overseas, so I asked my pastor for advice and he put me on to BMS, where I found out about the Summer Teams programme."

The group arrived in Prague and were at first very apprehensive about what they saw.

"We were all expecting a very run-down building with lots to do, but the first impression was that everything was

up and running perfectly. I started to wonder if I had interpreted what God was saying to me wrong!"

But their apprehensions were soon dispelled when the work started. Firstly, there was the leaky porch to mend, then the walls of a classroom to be painted, and then the children's playground to be built! Jonathan is a builder/woodworker by trade, and his skills were invaluable. The work they did allowed the organisation and its staff to carry on teaching and do the day-to-day running of the seminary, while the team got on with all those vital jobs that there is never time to do. The encouragement from the staff was immense.

"While we were working, people would come in constantly offering things like drinks and radios to help us along. They were all very thankful we were there. When we were doing the playground, the children would ask every morning if it was ready and would watch us while we built it."

Jackie intends to use the visit as a 'first step' to a longer-term project in the future after her university course is finished. She also intends to take a few more short-term voluntary trips every summer until that time comes.

This year 21 people went to Brazil or Prague as part of a BMS Summer Team. Next year, BMS is hoping to add more destinations to the list. ●

If you're interested in going on a BMS Summer Team please tick the box on page 35.

**"The work they did
allowed the
organisation and its
staff to carry on
teaching and do the
day-to-day running of
the seminary"**



When this year's returned Action Teams were asked for what advice they would give someone thinking about joining a **BMS Action Team**, they said...

"Go for it!"



"We have been amazed to see how the people respond to the gospel. We have had the opportunity to preach and share testimonies and have been amazed as we have witnessed many people turn to Christ through it."

(Lorraine Pratt,
Nicaragua Team)

"It was a big thing for me to leave home and all my securities to go to Brazil, and I've learned a lot."

(Brazil Team member).

"This was an amazing experience. It took a little time to really understand the difficulties that people had to face in this country. There seemed very little hope for many Albanians at the time and I found it a great privilege to work and share with people the hope that we have as Christians."

(Jonathan Lochhead,
Albania Team)

go for it – it will change your life and will be an experience you will never forget or regret."

(Albania Team)

"Do it, but it's not just a year out. There is so much more to it."

(Thailand Team)

"Do it, especially if you think you have no skills or special abilities to offer to God in overseas service... because that's precisely the sort of folks he wants!"

(India Team)

"If you want to know God better, do it."

(Bangladesh Team)

These young people felt their lives and outlooks had been radically changed by being part of a BMS Action Team. This gap year programme enables 18 to 25 year-olds to be on the cutting edge of overseas mission. You could be involved in

leading Bible studies, youth work, teaching people English, playing games with street children, practical maintenance of church buildings, and much, much more.

In the past young people have gone to far-flung places like Nepal, Thailand and Zimbabwe, as well as nearer to home places like France, Malta and Albania. The destinations vary from year to year, according to need.

Do you have what it takes? The list of required skills isn't long: you need to have a passion for God and a desire to know him more in a new and challenging situation; you'll want to share your faith, and have a flexibility to be trained and have a go at anything.

Action Teams start in September with one month of quality training; then it's overseas in a team of four for six months, working with BMS personnel or partners across the world, contributing to their work,

meeting local people and experiencing a new culture. You'll return to the UK in April, and then do a two month tour of UK churches, helping them in their work and sharing your experiences. ●

Want to find out more?

Call, write, or e-mail us at:

Action Teams, BMS World Mission, PO Box 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8XA.

Tel 01235 517654

E-mail: actionteams@bms.org.uk

"Do it baby" (Thailand Team)

Identifying need

The UNDP publishes a Human Development Index (HDI) as a measure of development in different countries. It is based on three distinct components of longevity, education and income per head. It ranges from 0 to 1, with Sierra Leone (0.254) and Canada (0.932) marking the extremes (as of 1997).

A way of identifying spiritual need is to use the percentage of evangelical Christians in a country's population (PE). The source for this is the Operation World database.

This table shows the countries in the world with the greatest physical need combined with spiritual need.

Country	HDI	% evangelical Christian
Bangladesh	0.44	0.1
Benin	0.421	2
Bhutan	0.459	0.3
Burkina Faso	0.304	5
Cote d'Ivoire	0.422	5
Djibouti	0.412	0.04
Gambia	0.391	0.2
Guinea	0.398	0.5
Guinea Bissau	0.343	0.9
Laos	0.491	0.7
Mali	0.375	0.8
Mauritania	0.447	0
Nepal	0.463	0.6
Senegal	0.426	0.07
Sierra Leone	0.254	2
Sudan	0.475	3
Togo	0.469	2
Yemen	0.449	0.004



Ways to help your children have their own faith and personal relationship with God:

- 1 Take them with you to church and talk with them about the experience.
- 2 Let them know you have a personal relationship with God.
- 3 Encourage them to witness to their friends by explaining their personal relationship with God.
- 4 Teach them how to pray about their concerns.
- 5 Help them to be involved in their own ministry out of their own interests.
- 6 Help them to know people who have a deep relationship with God.
- 7 Allow them to express themselves fully in discussing what a specific Scripture passage means to them.
- 8 Encourage them to think for themselves.
- 9 Admit mistakes. Help children to understand the Christian life is a process and that Christians are not perfect.
- 10 Help them to determine what God wants them to do, rather than what parents or others want them to do.

(Baptist Press)

take 2

Charismatic Growth

Numbers of pentecostal and charismatic Christians (worldwide):

1900	900,000	
1970	72,000,000	
2000	523,700,000	(27.7% of all Christians)

If this growth continues it is estimated that the number will reach:

2025	811,500,000	(32.5% of all Christians)
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The largest contributions to the figures are from:

Latin America	141,430,000
Asia	134,900,000
Africa	126,000,000

(Europe has 37,600,000 pentecostal and charismatic Christians).

(David Barrett's newest publication of "World Christian Encyclopaedia")

Comparison between France and the UK

	France	UK
Population	58 million	59 million
Income spent on food	17%	17%
Income spent on medicine	10%	2%
Pop. living in villages with less than 2,000	27%	12%
No of practising Muslims per evangelical	12	0.5
People who earn their living from the occult	70,000	20,000 (est)

(Christian Research Association)

book review

book reviews

BOOKS

Book Title:

Author:

Publisher:

Reviewer:

No of pages:

Price:

Stop Check Go

Ditch Townsend

Paternoster Publishing

(ISBN 1-85078-240-7)

Julie Wilson, BMS

Manager for Volunteer Development

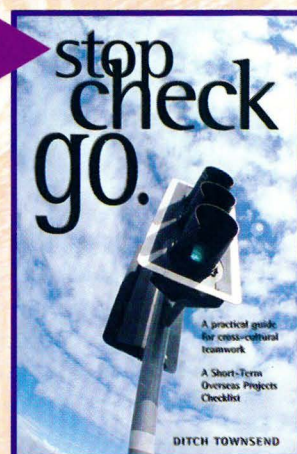
160

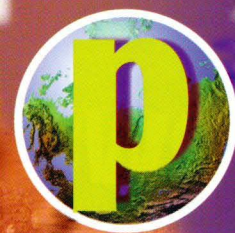
£6.99

In writing *Stop Check Go*, Dr 'Ditch' Townsend has drawn from his extensive experience of organising short-term mission trips for Tearfund to produce a concise manual for all those involved in this type of mission. It is, in effect, one large checklist for individuals and teams to work through and avoid sleepless nights of worry to ensure proper preparation. He has thought of everything from 'how to vote from overseas' to 'dealing with conflict in your mission team' and challenging questions about 'why go anyway?' There are spaces after each section so that you can use it as a workbook as you prepare... particularly handy if you are doing a book review!

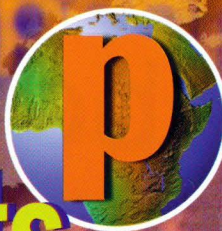
The book also has chapters for organisers, team leaders and overseas hosts. This means that certain sections will be more relevant for some than others, and understandably there are one-liners on topics that are books in themselves. It does, however, serve the purpose of prompting your thinking and has useful signposting to further sources of information.

For those folk who like to have a good understanding of the big machine within which they are a cog, you will appreciate this helpful summary. As an organiser of short-term missions, I will certainly encourage those who desire to be well prepared and effective overseas to read this, and in turn expect them to keep me on my toes! ●

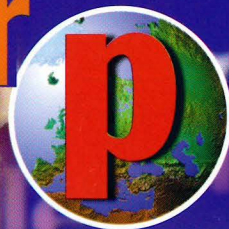




projects



prayer



people

PROJECTS UPDATE

PRAYER FOCUS



Project: **Watch Your Language** **WOW project 2000**

This children's project is raising money for work in South Central Asia – a new part of the world for BMS to be working in. As the

title would suggest we have to be a bit careful exactly what we say about this country and the people involved.

However one example is in the isolated region of the Hazarajat mountains, where a medical programme is providing health care and teaching medical skills. The main areas of its work are:

- 1 to help mothers and babies, especially women who need emergency midwifery services.
- 2 to give children vital vaccinations. So far 5,000 children under the age of four have been treated in 80 villages.
- 3 to educate people about hygiene and healthy living in a necessary step forward to improve their general health.

Money raised through Watch Your Language will help support this programme.

Although it might seem difficult to publicise a project when you have to 'watch your language', don't let this put you off from participating in this exciting project. There's still time to get to grips with it and support the WOW project 2000. Tick the coupon on page 35.

Graham Sansom: **Tirana, Albania**

For many missionaries, finally achieving the dream and answering



the call to serve God overseas is a great moment in their lives.

None more so than Baptist minister, Graham

Sansom, who has recently




started work for BMS in Tirana, Albania. Before he set off for Albania, he told of how he had sensed the calling to do God's work overseas for over four decades.

"For all those years, I have held before the Lord, an open hand, a sense of calling to serve him in other lands".

After completing his ministry on Easter Sunday this year, he set about moving to Birmingham to the BMS International Mission Centre (IMC) to begin training for his time in Albania. After months of preparation, he set off to start his new work for God on 26 August this year.



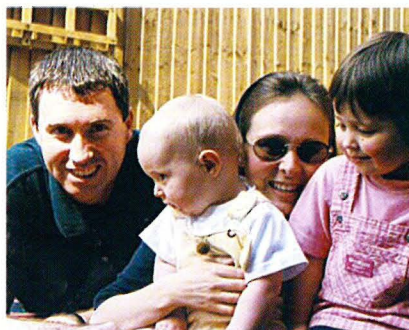
Please pray:

-  **That Graham will cope with missing the loved ones he has left behind.**
-  **For his home church, Wollaston, Northamptonshire, that it will find a new pastor swiftly and find comfort in the knowledge that Graham is where God wants him to be.**
-  **That the reality will be every bit as fulfilling as the dream for Graham.**

Andrew and Michelle Furber and family: **Leeds, UK**





Back in the UK, the Furber family are continuing their period of leave of absence from BMS in Leeds. The family are looking to go back to Nepal, where they completed a four-year long term of work with BMS last year.



At the moment, Andrew is looking into the possibility of a post working with HIV patients in Kathmandu. He is also celebrating after hearing he has passed all the exams he took in June, leaving him with a Masters in Public Health (MPH). In the time they have left in Leeds, they will continue to attend South Parade Baptist Church, where Michelle is involved with leading an under two's group.

Please pray

-  **That the preparations to return to Nepal will go smoothly.**
-  **For South Parade Baptist Church who will miss their input and attendance when they leave.**



**Rebecca Pearce:
Surkhet, Nepal**

Rebecca has been in Nepal since early this year working within the Tuberculosis and Leprosy Project (TLP) of the International Nepal Fellowship. Although daily living is often hard, time seems to fly for her. "It's amazing how quickly the months go by!"



Rebecca is presently living in the rural town of Surkhet in the mid-western region of Nepal with fellow BMS worker Julie Russell. The monsoon season made life very hard with heavy rain each day and humidity of approaching 100 per cent!

"It was like living in a sauna and anything not aired would quickly become mouldy!"

Rebecca has decided to stay in Surkhet and will be working on the management side of TLP, ensuring a high quality of diagnosis and treatment.

Please pray:

- 1p That Rebecca will cope well with the steep learning curve that ahead of her.**
- 1p For the staff of the TLP centre in Surkhet, that they will continue to provide the best service they can.**

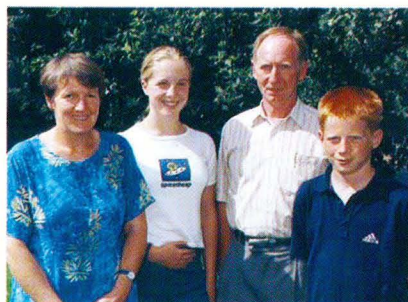
**Phillip & Vivienne Hatton:
Brussels, Belgium**

The Hatton family, who served previously with BMS in Congo, have been working in Belgium since the start of the year.

They are based in Brussels and working with the Belgian Baptist Union (UBB) in a small church plant outreach post just outside the city centre. The church currently meets in the downstairs of a town building, which houses the Italian Evangelical Church above it. However, the 'upstairs church' is planning to move to another location, leaving the UBB with the whole building. Although this means a higher rent, it also means more space!



Baptists have only very recently been recognised by the government in



Belgium, so even though there are churches in existence, they are few and far between and none of them use the two main languages of the city, French or Dutch. This makes the evangelical work of the Hattons very important. Working alongside a pastoral couple, they have

helped to identify what their church needs to do to attract a larger number of people. Their time also includes the setting up Bible study classes. But Phillip claims it is the children, Ruth and Christopher, who have the hardest job. For the first part of the year they were taking their lessons in French speaking schools. Thankfully, they were able to secure a place at the European school and started lessons there, in English, this September. It's been back to school for Vivienne and Phillip as well as they set about improving their French. They have both taken exams in the subject and are awaiting the results eagerly!

Please pray:

- 1p For Ruth and Christopher as they settle into their new school.**
- 1p For those who are part of the fellowship and that they will continue the good work already started.**



BMS personnel introduce some friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



Samuel Chakma, Bangladesh

Samuel Chakma is 19 years old and the son of an ex-leprosy patient. His father works as a cook in the Leprosy Hospital. He has two brothers; Shubimol aged 17 and Shukimol aged 15. I first met him when he was five years old and going to the primary school. At first he did fairly well at school, but gradually his results got poorer due to his ill health and he dropped out of school altogether. Samuel's family are Christians and all three brothers regularly attended Sunday school.

For several years I saw little of Samuel. Then in 1998, the Under Fives Clinic at Chandraghona needed a driver's help and Samuel was selected. He now has his driver's licence and is a faithful and reliable worker. The income he receives helps feed his parents and family.

Samuel and his family attend Chandraghona Leprosy Church and witness to Jesus Christ in their community. He is very grateful to God for an employment opportunity.

From Sue Headlam, former BMS worker in Bangladesh

Pastor Dobos Karoly, Hungary

Tamas the taxi driver offered to take me 25 km to Budapest Airport to try to get my luggage. We were there some hours, but Tamas wouldn't take any money.

"It's for Jesus", he said.

There was time for plenty of conversation.

"Tell me how you became a Christian", I asked.

"It was an old man of 97. He told me about Jesus."

"I think I know that man", I said. "It's Mr Dobos."

In fact, I don't know Mr Dobos all that well. I had met him two years ago at his church. We chatted in English and he invited me to a meeting at the Leprosy Mission. He walked off down the path, straight as a beanpole.

Mr Dobos had survived nearly a

century – a century marked by political oppression and extreme violence of one sort or another. He has just continued his steady walk as a Christian. He trained to be a pastor. Even a time in the States did not deflect him, nor, on his return, a posting as a youth worker with an almost non-existent salary. He started the Ukraine Leprosy Mission, but the communist government of the day said that the Ukraine didn't need any mission. Mr Dobos just continued, more quietly.

Mr Dobos, now 97, is still continuing. He is President of the Mission, and Tamas takes him to the meetings in his taxi. His son is now retired. Two of his grandchildren are pastors; two are teachers, working with young people in the church. I've recently met baby Lili, of the next generation.

When I have left Budapest and gone home with my luggage, the Dobos family will still be here, continuing their steady walk as Christians, still talking about Jesus to taxi drivers like Tamas.

From Stanley Hornsby, former BMS volunteer in Hungary.



Above: Stanley Hornsby with Mr Dobos

People Wanted

Could this be you?

Nepal (INF)

Gynaecologist Consultant/Trainer

Required to develop an INF programme of gynaecology services and training 'camps', reaching out from the referral centre into District Hospitals and possibly Health Posts. There is an opportunity for some part-time Obstetrics and Gynaecology consultancy in a base tertiary hospital, together with training of Medical Officers within the hospital. Qualifications required: MBBS plus MRCOG, plus at least two years relevant work experience. Laparoscopy and Family Planning experience preferred.

Cyprus (SAT-7)

Information Officer

Urgently required to research, write and distribute information relating to SAT-7 activities, prayer letters, newsletters, press releases etc. This person will also prepare and distribute promotional view graphs, promotional videos, brochures, manage the SAT-7 web site, manage the calendar for critical events, and funding applications, arrange conferences and hotel accommodation, escort visitors in Nicosia and the Middle East, facilitate Board meetings, distribute agendas and record minutes.

Bosnia

Co-ordinator

A volunteer co-ordinator to oversee the work of the Baptist churches in Sarajevo and the surrounding Balkan area is urgently needed. This is a key position, with the need to liaise with local pastors and other Christian organisations. A minimum offer of six months service

South Central Asia

Teachers for Expatriate Children

Qualified teachers are needed to teach small groups (four to 12 children) of primary aged expatriate children of varying nationalities. Teachers are needed for two to three-year terms. Required to teach all subjects at primary/elementary level.

Nepal (UMN)

General Subject Teachers

Teachers in General Subjects are needed for Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) which provides education for both mission and non-mission children aged 11 to 18 years. The children are from many different countries. The school is situated in the Kathmandu Valley and provides a vital support service to UMN and other mission families. Teachers of Geography, Computer Studies and Science/Biology are urgently needed, but applications from teachers of other disciplines are welcome.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Pastoral Worker

Required to work with the local church part-time, and do some part-time evangelism. Since the country has a civil war in progress, this position is suitable for single people or couples without children.

This is only a very small selection of the kind of vacancies we have available at any one time. Our 'People Wanted' list is changing all the time. Please contact us, and ask if we have anything for you. See page 35.

Personnel news

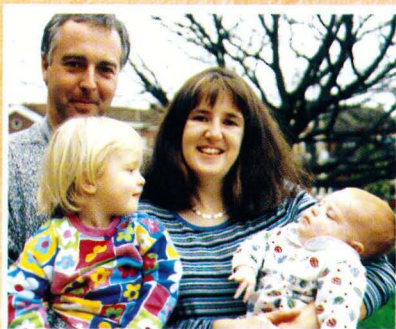
Iain and Karen Gordon

Recently returned from being seconded by BMS to UMN in Nepal, BMS personnel Iain and Karen (and family) are now in Cyprus. Here Iain will take up the post of Chief Operating Officer for SAT-7, the TV broadcasting service for Christians of the Middle East, which is based in Cyprus. This post is currently held by BMS volunteer, John Rogers, and there will be a good period of handover before John and his wife, Jean, return to the UK next year.



Mark and Andrea Hotchkin

BMS doctors, Andrea and Mark Hotchkin, have had to return home to Yorkshire after having to leave the Republic of Guinea in West Africa, where they had been working, following outbreaks of fighting by rebel groups. Forty people, including a UN worker had been killed, and houses burnt. The Hotchkins are members of Wakefield Baptist Church, and are seconded by BMS to the Leprosy Mission at Macenta Hospital.



MBE for Ann!

BMS nurse, Ann Bothamley, has received an MBE for services to healthcare in India.

The award was presented by the British High Commissioner to India, Sir Robert Young, in a special ceremony in Vellore – the small town in India where Ann had worked for 31 years. He thanked her for her 'tireless' and 'selfless' efforts, as a nurse and hostel parent.



Ann did her nursing training in the UK and went to the Christian Medical Hospital in Vellore, India with BMS in 1967. Her work over the years has included being responsible for over 170 nurses, clerks and other staff and being in charge of the 180-bed private patient block called 'M' Ward. She has also set up a Coronary Care Unit and Bone Marrow Transplant Unit within the hospital.

As well as her medical work, Ann took on the lengthy task of opening a hostel for children. Its aim was to provide a place where children could stay, accessible for school, and allowing their parents to continue to work at small mission hospitals throughout India. It thus gave a

secure home, and education for these children.

Although Ann retired in 1998, she still continues to live in Vellore, working with the children at the hostel.

Ann comments on the occasion: "It was quite special for the British High Commissioner to come all the way from Delhi to the small town of Vellore. (He) allowed a prayer to be said and for me to speak. Not quite what would have happened at the Palace!"

BMS video wins gold award

River of Life, the BMS World Mission video, released as part of this year's harvest resources has won the Christian Broadcasting Council's gold award as best Christian video.

BMS General Director, Alistair Brown, said, "I'm thrilled this harvest video has won the top award. It's a tribute to the vision of our team, and especially our producer, Katrina Lawson, who researched and filmed the work in Bangladesh so well. And I'm pleased the Christian Broadcasting Council has recognised a video with such an important message. Now I hope thousands watch it and identify with the needs of the people of the Rangamati Hill District. That's what matters most to us." The award is one-better than last year's 'Streets Ahead' harvest video, which won a highly commended award in the Best Christian Video category. This was filmed in the favelas of São Paulo, Brazil.

BMS Relief Fund Grants

The following recent grants have been made:

Indonesia £18,000

To help the refugees who are fleeing fighting and whose homes have been destroyed.

Thailand £10,000

This is a further contribution towards the work of the Burma Border Consortium who are helping to meet the needs of 120,000 Burmese refugees in camps along Thailand's western border.

Nicaragua £10,000

To help in the relief work of the Nicaragua Baptist Convention following a series of earthquakes in July.

Brazil £2,000

To help in the purchase and distribution of water, food, clothes and mattresses for some of those affected by the worst floods in 25 years in north-east Brazil.

North India £5,000

To help provide food, shelter, clothing and initiatives to prevent the spread of disease in North East India following three months of devastating floods.

Chechnya £6,450

To provide nutritional assistance for 1,000 refugee and orphaned children both in Grozny and the camps in Ingushetia.

Signs and Blunders

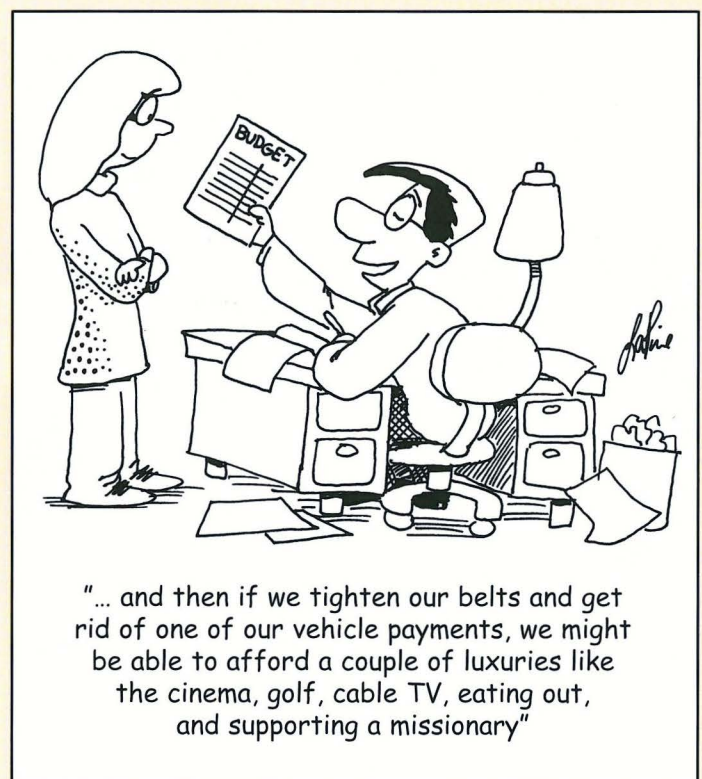
The Lord is certainly providing our needs. We had prayed for a snooker table and a table-tennis table. The cheapest second-hand snooker table was £500. We didn't ask the Lord for the money but that he would find us a better bargain!

Three days later, laying beside the road and waiting to be picked up by the local rubbish disposal truck, was a snooker table! We claimed it, thanked the Lord, phoned round for a van and four hours later we had installed a perfectly good snooker table. People said that they had never seen such a table being thrown out... and it had been on the side of the road for more than three days! (The table-tennis table came two days later!)

From Joyce and Stuart Filby, BMS workers in Belgium

In the Nepali language the words for holiday (bidaa) and marriage (bihaa) are similar. I used to get them confused. When our daughter came to stay (for a holiday) I went around introducing her and telling people that she had come for marriage. Our Nepali friends thought we had adopted the custom of arranged marriages!

From Paul Drinkwater, former BMS worker in Nepal



Check Out November /December 2000

November 2000

Arrivals

None

Departures

John and Valerie Furmage to Paraná, Brazil

John and Lidia Pullin to Campo Grande, Brazil

December 2000

Arrivals

John and Norma Clark from Fortaleza, Brazil

Mary Parsons from Pristine, Kosova

Departures

None

world

mission link

Festival surpasses expectations

More than 5,000 people visited the Wye Valley Christian Festival held at Gorsley, near Ross-on-Wye over the August Bank Holiday period. As well as visiting the now famous Flower Festival, visitors were also able to browse around the many mission displays, including the BMS World Mission stand.

This year Ian Coffey led the morning Bible studies, and other people making guest appearances included singer Nia and fitness expert, Rosemary Conley. On the first day the organisers were expecting seven coaches and 18 turned up! Visitors came from as far afield as Birmingham, Bristol and South Wales.



River of Life revisited?

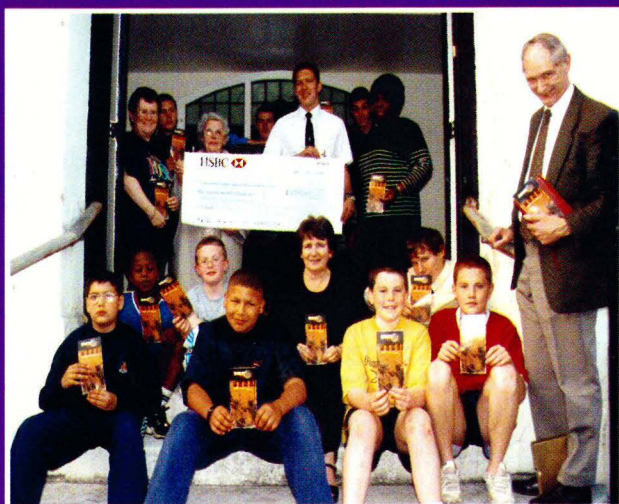
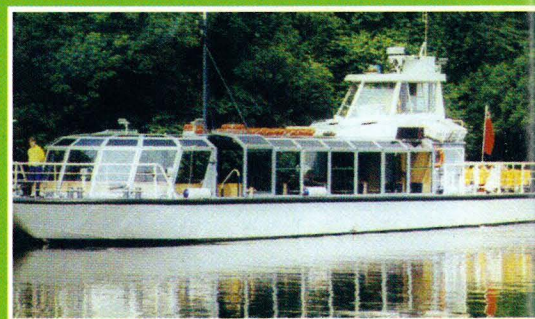
BMS worker Sue Headlam thought she had seen the last of travelling by water transport, but she was wrong!

Members of Dartmouth

Baptist Church arranged for Sue, who was their Link missionary, to enjoy a boat trip on the River Dart with them when she was making a visit to the Torbay area.

It wasn't all leisure for Sue – she spoke about her 25 years with BMS in Chandraghona, and organised a quiz on Bangladesh for the Dartmouth crew.

Everyone had a wonderful day, and £185 was collected for the BMS River of Life Harvest Appeal for Bangladesh.



Walking for famine relief

The boys from the 1st Fulham Boys' Brigade Company wanted to help those afflicted by famine in Ethiopia. They hit upon the idea of a sponsored walk around Bishop's Park in Fulham, encouraged by their Captain, Mark van Cuylenburg. On the day both Captain and officers, church members, families and friends, and, of course, the boys all joined the walk. They raised £250 for the BMS Relief Fund, which went towards the £10,000 grant given by BMS to the Mekane Yesus Ethiopian Evangelical Church to help provide food for famine victims.

Mission priorities

Now it's your opportunity to find out more, to give, to pray and to go...

INFORMATION AND PRAYER RESOURCES

- ☐ I would like to find out more about BMS work in:
- ☐ Croatia
 - ☐ Europe
 - ☐ Kosova
 - ☐ India
 - ☐ Nepal

- ☐ I would like to start receiving prayer letters from:
- ☐ Kate & Simon Harry
 - ☐ Justine Horsfall
 - ☐ Katie & Reuben Martin

GOING

- ☐ I would like to find out more about:
- ☐ the vacancies advertised on page 31, especially (please state)
 - ☐ other long-term vacancies
 - ☐ being a BMS Volunteer
 - ☐ overseas Action Teams
 - ☐ Summer Teams

GIVING TO BMS

- ☐ I would like to give financially to BMS.
- ☐ I would like to make a donation of £.....
- (Please see Method of Payment box, right)

Please send me:

- ☐ Ways of Giving leaflet, which tells me all about the different ways I can give
- ☐ Information about the BMS Birthday Scheme
- ☐ Details of the BMS Relief Fund
- ☐ Gift Aid declaration form

PROJECTS

- ☐ I would like to order:
- ☐ Watch your Language

- ☐ Anything else, not mentioned above (please specify)

Name

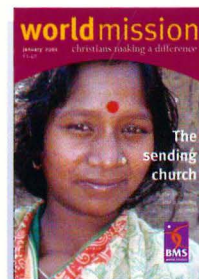
Address

Post Code

Please cut out whole page or photocopy and send to: Resources, BMS World Mission, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8XA

Registered charity no 233782 VAT registration no 232 5237 89

From January, the new **World Mission** magazine will continue to carry news and features of BMS work, and will give an exciting and challenging perspective on reaching the world with the love of God. A copy of **World Mission** magazine makes an excellent gift at only £8.40 per year. That's a £1.50 reduction on this year's price – and it comes with free Prayer Guide three times a year. Wonderful value!



If you want to order World Mission magazine for yourself, just fill in the payment details and your name and address in the coupon at the bottom of the page.

If you want to give World Mission as a present, please fill in the recipient's name in the space provided plus payment details and your own name and address at the bottom of the page.

(Recipient's) Name.....

Address.....

Post Code.....

Starting with the:

- ☐ Jan ☐ Mar ☐ May ☐ Jul ☐ Sep ☐ Nov issue
- (please tick your choice)

Method of payment

I enclose my cheque or postal order made payable to: **BMS**

or I wish to pay by* Mastercard Visa Delta Switch

(*Delete as appropriate)

and authorise you to debit my account with the purchase on this coupon.

Card no

Card expiry date /

Delta and Switch only: card issue no

valid from /

Signature.....

Daytime tel no (in case of query)

For office use only

Christmas cards

new

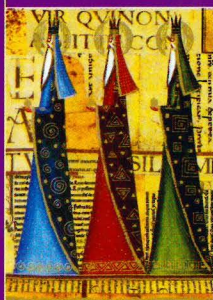
for
2000

CC21 Kings

Size: 118mm x 168mm

(one design)

£2.25 for 10



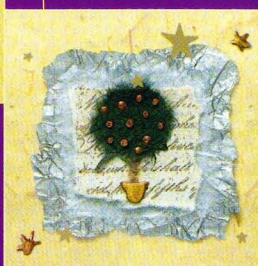
CC20 Christmas Trees

Size: 116mm x 116mm

(two designs)

(no verse)

£1.99 for 10



This Christmas support
BMS and its work by
buying BMS cards.

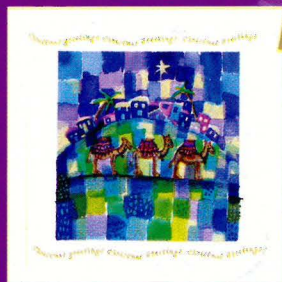
All cards contain a
Christmas greeting
and Christian verses
unless otherwise
stated.

CC18 Scenes of Bethlehem

Size: 145mm x 145mm

(two designs)

£2.25 for 8



CC17 Star and Dove

Exclusive to BMS

Size: 179mm x 79mm

(two designs)

£2.35 for 10



CC18W Scenes of Bethlehem (bilingual)

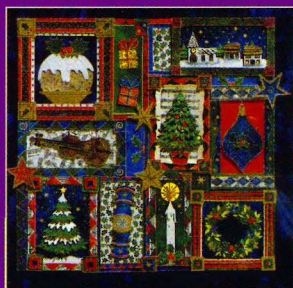
Size: 145mm x 145mm

(two designs)

(available in English/Welsh)

£2.50 for 8

To place your
order please use
the separate order
form inside.



CC22 Welsh collage

Size: 145mm x 145mm

(one design)

(Welsh text)

£2.50 for 10



CC19 Fun Angel mixed pack

Size: 116mm x 116mm

(two designs)

£1.99 for 8



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